LUTHERAN FUNDAMENTALS

G. H. GERBERDING, D. D., LL. D.

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LUTHERAN FUNDAMENTALS

A SIMPLE SYSTEM OF SCRIPTURE TRUTH
WITH APPLICATIONS

FOR THE COMMON MAN

By

G. H. GERBERDING, D.D., LL. D.

Professor of Practical Theology
Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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DEDICATION

TO ALL LUTHERAN BROTHERHOODS,
AND TEACHERS OF RELIGION
IN CHURCH SCHOOLS, THIS
BOOK IS DEDICATED
IN HOPE

BY

THE AUTHOR

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A LAYMAN'S FOREWORD

TO WRITE a book on a scientific subject that will be read and understood and appreciated by the common man is a formidable undertaking. For a generation Dr. Gerberding has been writing books on varied subjects, many of which have carried a message to the rank and file in our Church and all of which have been received with appreciation in wide circles. For thirty years the author has been a professor of Practical Theology. In all his teaching he has ever emphasized the importance of being practical and so simple that the common man could not fail to understand. To the average layman a treatise on Dogmatics would ordinarily make no appeal. He would avoid it as too technical, too difficult to understand.

We know of no other book which attempts what the author has here accomplished, name-

ly, to set down in popular form, devoid of technical arrangement and phraseology, the great fundamental teachings of our Church. We believe the author has done a work which will be well received by many who love our Church and her great mission in the world today, and also by many sincere seekers after truth outside of our Church.

While it is true that the Lutheran Church is noted above all other churches for its wonderful system of dogmatics, we believe it is also true that relatively few laymen in our Church have a clear conception of her great doctrines. The object of this book is to familiarize our laity with the teachings of the Church. The author develops doctrine after doctrine in a most delightful and happy way. It is the experienced teacher explaining the great fundamental beliefs of the Church. It is the well-seasoned Bible student marshaling passage after passage from the Word to prove that our doctrines are not man-made. It is the heart-warm Christian setting forth the things which alone can satisfy the longings and cravings of the human soul. It is the practical teacher talking in a way that can be understood by the common man, and doing it in a very human way.

The book is fascinating. Some passages are of extreme beauty. For example, the chapter on the Trinity, where the author shows in his very best style how the different persons of the Trinity fit into the life of the believer at various times. Or on Baptism, where he draws a pen-picture of the Baptist mother and of the Lutheran mother.

Pastors will find this little volume invaluable for distribution among those whom they are bringing into church membership. It will serve a most useful purpose in the hands of our Church Council-men, our Sunday-school teachers and other lay workers. It should be studied as a text-book in church-schools until each doctrine is clearly fixed in the mind. It is dedicated to all Lutheran Brotherhoods, and every Brotherhood should use it as a study book.

In these days when there is so much laxity and carelessness in spiritual things we often hear it said that one church is as good as another. The peculiar glory of the Lutheran Church is that she holds fast to the Word of God; that she emphasizes the things which that Word emphasizes; that she neither adds to nor detracts from that Word. When the day shall come that the common man in our

Church understands and therefore appreciates the great fundamental teachings of God's Word, the Lutheran Church will be a vital force not only in the lives of those who constitute her membership, but also in the life of our nation.

This litte book, if properly used, will hasten that day. J. K. JENSEN.

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INTRODUCTION

DIVISION! Division is again called for. From the beginning division has been called for. Over and over again, division has come. To the end, division will come.

Inside the Garden of Eden God said to the serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." Division was predicted in Paradise. At its very gates humanity divided. Abel and Cain were both religious. Both brought offerings to the Lord. God had respect unto Abel and to his offering. But unto Cain and his offering He had no respect. There was division. From that day forth, some followed the faith of Abel, others walked in the way of Cain. Humanity was divided. The division has continued and will continue to the end.

The Cainites brought on the Flood. The new humanity was of one speech and of one language. The new humanity grew strong and self-sufficient. Men agreed to build a monument to show that humanity could be, and

would be, independent of God. God scattered the new race. There was division.

Through Moses God made a new nation. That nation became a Kingdom. That Kingdom was rent in twain. There was division. There came disaster.

The Fulness of Time came. Peace on earth and good will to men were heralded from heaven. The Church, against which the gates of hell should not prevail, was promised by Jesus. More than once strife and division came unto the band of Christ's disciples. Heresy, schism and sect raised their ugly heads in the Apostolic Church. Division was there.

The Church after the apostles was the Church still in its earliest love. Heresies and divisions came again. Later a great schism split the Church into Eastern and Western. In the latter a mighty, monarchial, despotic hierarchy was built up. Worldly power brought in worldly corruption in faith and in life.

The blessed, heaven-born Reformation came. It brought back an open Bible and showed poor, burdened, and sin-sick humanity how to find forgiveness of sin, life and salvation in and through its blessed pages. Those who accepted what the Reformation offered

were separated from the church that followed the pope and human tradition. There was division. But for the separated ones it was a second fulness of the time, a time of spiritual refreshing. Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. He was again walking among the golden candlesticks. Heaven was open, and the angels were singing again the old Glorias.

But, alas and alack! Division came again. The so-called Protestant Church, which had uncovered, and was building again on the foundation of prophets and apostles, with Jesus Christ as the true corner stone, was rent asunder. There came to be a Lutheran Church and a Reformed Church, which afterwards separated into many divisions with various names. There came to be two great Protestant theologies, the one Lutheran, the other Reformed. The latter has many variations. As over against the Lutheran theology it is called Reformed theology. In many points these two theologies are contrary, the one to the other.

From the Reformed Churches many heretical and dangerous sects have gone out. If all thinking people could be made to see that there are real, serious, and deep-going differences between Lutheran and Reformed theol-

ogy, much confusion of thought would be avoided. May this Book help all who read it to distinguish between Lutheran and Reformed teaching. There are deep-going differences. A general consciousness of this will greatly strengthen our dear Church. "He teaches well who distinguishes well."

All the Reformed Churches that accept, believe, teach, and confess the so-called ecumenical or world-wide creeds of the early Church, i. e., the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds, are generally recognized as Evangelical Churches.

Leaving out the fanatical and soul-destroying sects, there has grown up within the Reformed Evangelical Churches a great and threatening modern schism. It grows out of two opposite views and attitudes as to the Bible. The two parties are known as the Fundamentalists and the Non-fundamentalists or Liberals, or Modernists. The latter refuse to accept and confess, among others, such doctrines as: The Inspiration of the Bible; The Trinity; The Virgin Birth and Deity of Christ; The Vicarious Atonement; Original Sin; The Need of Regeneration and Renewal by the Holy Ghost, the Resurrection and Final Judgment.

The former believe that all these doctrines are fundamental to true Christianity and are part of that faith once for all delivered to the saints. There is a schism. Again division is called for. Division is here.

Here is a surprise, a wonder! The original Protestant Church, the greatest Protestant Church, the Church that more than one prominent Reformed writer has called "The Church of Theologians," the Lutheran Church in America, has no schism on Fundamentals! She believes, teaches, and confesses all the above named fundamental doctrines. She believes more. Her theology is deeper and clearer on the Person and Work of Christ than that of any other Church. She not only believes and teaches the sovereignty of grace, but she has, as no other Church has, a precious, helpful, and comforting explanation of *how* divine grace is brought to needy man.

In her teaching that grace comes through the Means of Grace, she bridges and harmonizes the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. To her this is fundamental and inexpressibly precious. It occupies a prominent place in her Dogmatics.

She sympathizes with all sound and earnest Fundamentalists. She is ready to help them.

They need to know this great, solid, satisfying Church. We cordially invite them to get acquainted with us.

This brings us to the purpose of this book. The setting forth of the fundamental beliefs of a Church in a natural and intelligible order is the task of Dogmatics. In Dogmatics the Church sets forth her beliefs and teachings, gives her reasons for holding them, and commends them to all earnest inquirers after truth. In her Dogmatic Theology, the Church's Fundamentals are to be found.

The Lutheran Church has probably produced more standard works on Dogmatic Theology than any other Church in the world. She has produced, is producing, and will continue to produce a brilliant array of scholarly, sound, Scriptural, and deeply spiritual men, who have given and will continue to give their life to the searching out and setting forth of the things that God would have His children know and believe. The best books on Dogmatic Theology have been and are those that show the sinner most clearly what he must do to be saved.

The writer of this book is not and never has been a professor of Dogmatic Theology. For about thirty years he has occupied the chair of

Practical Theology. He admires the dogmatic treatises of our great Church teachers, loves to study them, and hopes that our American Lutheran Church will produce many more. A year ago he spent a goodly part of his summer vacation in a careful study of that great, scholarly, comprehensive, and challenging latest American work entitled "Christian Dogmatics" written by his revered, admired, and beloved classmate in the Philadelphia Seminary fifty years ago, the Rev. Doctor C. E. Lindberg of Rock Island, Illinois.

Yes, we need and want these great, learned, and exhaustive works on Dogmatics. They are necessary for the Church's ministers, teachers, and leaders. They cannot do without them.

But the every day man cannot comprehend and will not read them. They are above him. He cannot reach up. They are too deep for him. He cannot penetrate them. He is numerous. He fills our Church pews—in as far as they are filled. As Lincoln said: "God must have loved the common people; He made so many of them." These common people need to know and understand the fundamental teachings of the great Church of the Reformation. That Church has a system of

truth that invites investigation. It bears acquaintance. The better it is known, the more it commends itself. Not one of the doctrines of this Church needs to be apologized for. Not one needs to be compromised or explained away. Our beliefs and teachings need nothing more than to be studied with an open mind.

To such a study this book invites. It wants to help thoughtful people. It desires the common man to read, to think, to understand.

This book claims to be thoroughly loyal to all the teachings and confessions of the Lutheran Church. The writer has given his life to the exposition, the defense, and the propagation of these teachings. They have satisfied the questionings and the yearnings of millions of devout seekers after truth. They give rest and peace and comfort to the writer's own soul. He loves them as he loves his life.

It may be that the arrangement, the order, the system in this book does not correspond to those in the scientific treatises on Dogmatics. Systems, plans, and arrangements are human. They are neither inerrant nor infallible. The old orders and systems may bear re-examination and revision.

This book may differ from the large, schol-

arly, and exhaustive works also in language. The phraseology and the statements may be different in form and expression. Perhaps this is so much the worse for the older and bigger books. There can be revision of form and restatement without changing of essence or principle.

We offer this book on Lutheran Fundamentals to the Common Man. Come now and let us reason together.

We cherish the fond hope that this book will also be helpful to the preacher. He preaches to, and endeavors to reach and influence for God and for good, the Common Man. He does not always succeed in getting his message across. May this book assist him in making the precious things of God so clear that the wayfaring man, though a fool, may understand, take to heart, and put into practice all these Lutheran Fundamentals.

PART I
GOD

Part I - Being and Nature of God.

CHAPTER I

We Believe in God

HEATHEN who never saw a Bible, who never heard a missionary, believe these four truths:

1. They believe that there is some kind of a supernatural power, some kind of a god or gods above them, whose rule and reign are supreme.

2. They believe that this supreme power, be it a personified god, or gods, is displeased with them, is angry, and is ready to punish them.

3. They believe that something must be done to appease this power in order to bring about reconciliation, harmony, peace.

4. They believe that, if reconciliation is not brought about, there will be retribution beyond the grave.

These feelings after God, if haply they might find Him, are remnants in their inner consciousness of God's revelation. He is not far from any one of them, but they know it not.

In this chapter we look at the first of the four beliefs.

Only the fool says in his heart: "There is no God." Belief in the existence and reality of a supreme and powerful being or beings is common to humanity. It is as widespread as the race. It is found even among the lowest and most degraded of the heathen. No race or tribe has ever been discovered among whose people there has not been found a dim, vague, but deep notion of some kind of a power above them, beyond them, on which they are dependent, and for whose favor they long. Even unbelieving scientific investigators acknowledge the universality of this belief It is an attribute of a human being. It is one of the decisive marks that separate a human from a brute. No brute ever evoluted into a rational, religious, believing, and worshiping creature.

If there is such a thing as an atheist, he has made himself such by wilfully crushing out his own highest and noblest human intuitions.

He is wilfully ignorant and hostile. He has made himself a fool, and the fool still says in his heart, "There is no God." But we believe in God.

Why do we believe in God? Can we justify our belief? Can we give an answer to every man that asks for a reason, a ground of our own belief? Some of the most enlightened among the heathen have set forth and elaborated a number of weighty proofs for the existence of a god or gods. We need name only Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero. Rationalistic, liberalistic, and naturalistic theologians always set great store by these heathen-born, traditional proofs for the existence of God. Evangelical and orthodox Dogmaticians set them forth, evaluate them, and show how far the believer may use the proofs for God's existence.

Does the thinking layman, the every day man, need them? He will at least want to know what they are. Without extended elaboration, we give the more important of these proofs.

We might divide them into those proofs that come to us from without and those proofs that we have within us. Of the former the

first is the so-called Cosmological Proof. This proof reasons from effect back to cause.

We see, we scan, we study the stupendous, boundless material Universe. Whence is it? Could it be uncaused, or self-caused? To satisfy our thinking, must we not believe in a cause? Can we think of a building without a builder, an automobile without a maker, a book without an author? Would not such ideas put an end to clear thinking?

Augustine in his searching and wonderful *Confessions* says in substance: "I asked the earth and all that is in it, and it answered: 'I am not He.' I asked the sea and all that swims, and creeps, and lives, and they answered: 'We are not God.' I asked the winds and the air and all that moves in them, and they said: 'Look higher, we are not God.' I asked the heavens, the sun, the moon and the stars, and they replied: 'We are not the God whom thou seekest!' And I asked all of these together: 'Since none of you, nor all of you are God, tell me of Him, and with a loud voice they answered: *'He Made Us!'*"

This is the Cosmological Argument, concretely, convincingly, and eloquently put. This is enough for any sincere and devout layman.

We cast a hasty glance at the Teleological Argument. This argument goes a step further than the former. It observes not merely the fact that there is a wonderful Universe, but it studies and sees evidence of intelligence, wisdom, planning, adaptation, and design everywhere. Where there is design, there must have been a Designer. Where we see a wonderfully planned and adapted Universe, there must have been a master Architect. We look into the heavens above us. We study sun, moon, planets, and stars. We learn that none are still. All are moving. The stellar Universe is the great clock-work of God, a stupendous exhibition of perpetual motion, without ever a collision; always keeping time for thousands and thousands of years. We learn that our earth is a planet, that it gets light from sun, moon, and stars; its heat, its day and night, its summer and winter from the sun; its rain and snow from the clouds. The air that we breathe is made up of the very gases, in exact proportion, that the human body needs. The earth's surface, directly or indirectly, produces all the food and drink we need, and from its bowels we dig up our fuel, our metals, and our precious stones. What a wonderful mother is Mother Earth! Who planned,

arranged, and adapted it so? We study our own bodies. Again what wonderful design and adaptation—fearfully and wonderfully made!

We cannot understand all things in or all things about nature. Sometimes she surprises, she staggers, she stuns and shocks us. Why did God make it so? Even so children are often grieved and shocked at what a good and wise father does. They don't know as much as father and can't see as far as he can. Yet father has a good purpose and a wise design. So we shortsighted children cannot understand all. Sometime we'll understand. Meanwhile we study, we admire, we appreciate more and more the Intelligence and Wisdom that made and arranged it all. The Telcological Argument is old. The writer of the Book of Job in the closing chapters sets it forth in a most striking and searching way. Psalm 104 sings out its glory. Everywhere "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." We too exclaim, "In wisdom hast Thou made them all."

The above are arguments based on externals. Even the glimpse of self was rather of external or physical self. But man is above

all else a spirit. The greatest thing in man is mind. The greatest thing in mind is spirit or soul. The spirit or soul has a non-moral and a moral side. The moral side knows that there is a right over against a wrong. It knows that it ought to follow the right and that in proportion as it attains the right it finds the good.

Within that mental side of man's nature there is a moral monitor or judge. We call it conscience. Conscience is that power in man's moral nature that discerns an inner law, a law written in the heart or soul that hales its possessor before the law and judges him by it. Conscience, if it has not been wilfully blinded and hardened, is conscious of the God who has written that law in the heart. Therefore, as we have seen above, all races and tribes believe in some kind of god or gods. This is the Moral Argument, or the argument from conscience, for the existence of God.

The moral nature longs for God. As Augustine so beautifully, so appealingly says: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God; therefore, we are without rest till we rest in Thee."

The soul that truly finds God finds rest and peace. It knows God by experience. It can

no longer question or doubt. Day by day that soul experiences the realness, the presence, the comfort of companionship with God. Spurgeon was once asked, "How do you know that there is a God?" Laconically he answered: "Why, I've been personally acquainted with Him for forty years."

This is the Argument from Christian Experience. It crowns all other evidences. It is final. It is enough.

CHAPTER II

The Being and Nature of God

IN this chapter we take for granted and anticipate the fact that God has revealed Himself to man in His Word. In a later chapter we shall come back and discuss the reality and nature of that Revelation.

Who and What Is God?

The God in whom we believe is not an idea. He is not an abstraction of human thought. He is not a creation of man's imagination. He is not a pervasive influence in nature. He is not an impersonal force.

Pantheism may speculate and dream and imagine a God who is immanent in nature and confined in the physical universe. Pantheists may spin their fancies about the soul of the world, the spirit that pervades what the senses perceive. In poetic dreams they may imagine a god who sleeps in every stone and clod, who moves in the winds, who opens his eyes in the flowers, who hums in the bees, chirps in the

crickets, croaks in the frogs, and makes melody in the mocking birds. Let them outrage their own nature if they will. Let them believe in such a god if they can. We pity them. Such beliefs are too irrational and too absurd for us. We cannot command such a stretch of credulity. Our belief is easier. It is really more rational.

We believe in God the Father Almighty. Our God is a living and personal being. He is over all, God blessed forever. He controls and guides all nature. No grass blade springs, no song sparrow sings, without His will.

God is absolute Personality.

Personality implies and includes self-consciousness and self-determination. God is conscious of Himself. He can say and does say: I am, I will, I say, I do. Nothing outside of Himself determines or can determine Him. He wills and does. With Him to will is to do. He is absolutely supreme and as free as He is supreme.

God Is a Spirit.

A spirit does not have flesh and bones. God does not have a material body. When His Word speaks of His face, His arm, His hand, or other bodily parts, the language is figura-

tive and is used to aid our weak understanding, which cannot comprehend pure spirit. Much less can it comprehend God as pure spirit. As a purely spiritual Being, we cannot by searching find out the Almighty to perfection.

If God in His nature and being were altogether such a one as man is; if our finite minds could altogether understand, comprehend, and conceive Him, He could in no sense be a real God, the God we need, the living God for whom the soul cries out.

God is absolute. His existence, His being, His personality is entirely independent of any other existence or being. He is absolutely self-sufficient and self-dependent. He knows no bounds or limitations. He is conditioned by nothing outside of Himself. He is infinite and cannot be conditioned by anything or anyone that is finite. As absolute, self-sufficient, self-dependent, He can condition Himself. He can will to limit and control Himself.

While therefore our finite mind and reason cannot fully understand or comprehend the absolute, the infinite personality of God, we can and do know that His personality is as different from a human personality as the in-

finite is different from the finite, as the heavens are higher than the earth. This is the personal God that we believe in. This is the God to whom I can say "Thou" and "Thee." I can say: "Abba, my Father, my God."

This God has revealed Himself as Triune or three-one. He is one in essence. He subsists in three Persons. He is three in one, and one in three. This is the doctrine of The Trinity. To man's unaided reason this doctrine is a mystery. We cannot understand it. Shall we on that account deny and reject it? Is not life itself a mystery? Is not life's whole pathway strewn with mysteries? Do we not largely live on and in mysteries? "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." This we read every Trinity Sunday.

We noted above that in His nature and being God is a mystery. This God has made Himself known to us in His Word. On the one hand *He claims to be One:*

Dt. 6. 4. "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord."

Dt. 4. 35. "The Lord he is God; there is none else beside him."

Isaiah 44. 6. "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."

Jesus says: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God." John 17. 3.

Paul says: "We know that . . . there is none other God but one." 1 Cor. 8. 4.

Therefore the Church confesses in the Nicene Creed:

"I believe in one God," and in the Athanasian Creed: "This is the Catholic [Christian] Faith: that we worship one God." And so we Lutherans believe, teach, and confess.

This God who is one in essence is *revealed in Scripture as three persons.* To each one of the three all the attributes possessed by the other two are ascribed. Each one is called God, each one has the attributes of God, each one does works that only God can do, and each one is worshiped as God. (To this we shall return when we consider the Son and the Holy Ghost separately.) Yet there are not three Gods, but one. At the baptism of Christ all three were present. The Son was baptized. The Holy Ghost descended in the form of a dove. The Father spoke from heaven. In John 14. 16, Jesus, the Son, said: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another

Comforter, that He may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth." In His last commission Jesus directs His apostles to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. — Three persons, one Name, one God. In the Apostolic Benediction, 2 Cor. 13. 14, we have: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost," mentioned together—three in one.

The Holy Church throughout the world has had good Scripture ground for believing, teaching, and confessing the doctrine of the Trinity. It has ever been one of her Fundamentals.

And is not this three-one God the very kind of a God that we need in our hazardous journey through life? Our hearts need just such a God as this. Our experience demands Him. Our life is made bearable and bright by Him.

Let us look at a few common Christian experiences. Cannot every Christian reader say:

I am living in a hostile world. The world of humanity lieth in wickedness. It is unfriendly to Christ and therefore to me. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God"?

Even nature is often in an angry mood. Her elements are sometimes dangerous and threatening. I am so helpless over against their fury. I am frequently filled with fears and forebodings. In such situations what kind of a God do I need? Like a trembling child I want a father. Then I think of and fly to God the Father. I recall that "as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." This God is almighty. He is good. He loves me. He promises to be with me, to protect me. I read Isaiah 43. 1, 2—"Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." I read again Psalms 23 and 91. I ponder anew Mt. 6. 19–34 and Rom. 8. 31–39. And this God is my Father! What a Father! Why should I be afraid?

At other times my sins rise up before me. They show me my unworthiness, my guilt, my condemnation. God has expressed His will in His law. His law demands perfect obedience, perfect love: "Thou shalt love the

Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." "Cursed is every one that abideth not in all things that are written in the law to do them." But I never did, I never could keep this holy law. Oh my sin, my sin, woe is me, I am undone!

At such a time I fear to flee to the glorious and holy Giver of the Law. I cannot fly to Sinai. Whither shall I go? What shall I do? I need God as a Redeemer, a Saviour from sin. I recall that Jesus Christ is God, that He and the Father are one, that He came to save me from sin.

I read again the old, old Passion Story. I see again how He who knew no sin was made sin for me. He was made a curse for me. I am moved. I am melted. I read again Psalm 51. I repeat again Luther's explanation of the second Article of the Apostles' Creed. I note the "I," the "me," the "my." Yes, this means me. In God the Son I find the God I need. I believe, I am comforted.

It is said of Martin Luther that at one time he imagined that the devil came to him and held up before him a long and frightful list of his sins. In great consternation Luther gazed

upon the list and recognized it as correct. Anguish and despair were laying hold of his soul. Then he bethought himself. His face lighted up and he cried: "Away, thou accuser, thou liar! These sins are no longer mine. Jesus Christ took them away from me and took them upon Himself. Go, settle with Him." And the devil fled. Luther had found in God the Son the God he needed at that time.

Again, at other times, my faith grows weak, my love grows cold. The flame of my inner life flickers low. My soul is drying up. My spiritual pulse is weak. I am spiritually sick. The fervor and joy of my former experience are waning. I do not delight myself in God as I once did. He seems so far away. I am spiritually so drowsy. I am threatened with falling from Grace.

I am aroused. I am disturbed. I become distressed. What shall I do? How can I return? How can these dry bones live? How can I get back my former life and love and joy and peace?

I recall the third Person in the Trinity. The Holy Ghost is God. He is the Life-giver, the Sanctifier, the Comforter. I read again the wonderful fourteenth, fifteenth, and

sixteenth chapters of John. I study the reference passages. I read and pray over Luther's explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed. I see my sin. I repent of it. I fly to God the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified. "He restoreth my soul." He breathes new life into my cold heart. I am renewed. I am happy.

And so I need the Triune God who is Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Christian experience demands the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity is a precious possession of the soul. It is fundamental.

The Attributes of God.

There are certain qualities in the Nature, Being, and Essence of God that mark Him off and separate Him from all other beings. They differentiate Him from every creature. They are possessions of His nature without which He would not be God. They are helps for us poor finite creatures in our endeavors to get clearer ideas of the Infinite. In a sense they are marks that help us to know God as God. Taken together they characterize God for us.

We note them here only in so far as they

assist us in getting a possibly clearer conception of God as He is in Himself, and also as He is in relation to His creation and in relation to ourselves.

We have shown above that God is the one Absolute Being. He claims the attribute of Absoluteness for Himself. In Isaiah 43. 10 He says: "I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am Jehovah." In Ex. 3. 14 He says to Moses: "I Am That I Am." Sometimes translated: I Am Because I Am.

God is infinite. In His perfections He cannot be limited or searched out. Psalm 145. 3, "His greatness is unsearchable." Job 11. 7, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?"

God is eternal. He is without beginning or end. What we call time does not count with Him. There is neither past nor future with Him. He knows only the everlasting present. Psalm 90. 2, "Even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." 1 Tim. 1. 17, Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

God is omnipresent. His presence is every-

where and everywhen. Jer. 23. 24, "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith Jehovah." 1 Kings 8. 27, "Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee." Psalm 139. 7–10, "Whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

God is unchangeable.

Mal. 3. 6, "I, Jehovah, change not." Psalm 102. 26, 27. "They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same." James 1. 17, "The Father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

God is omnipotent. He is the Almighty one. There is no limit to His power. This does not mean that He can do things contradictory to His nature. His nature and attributes imply certain necessary self-limitations. He cannot do wrong and remain the God that He is.

Heb. 6. 18, "It is impossible for God to lie."

He cannot sin. To do this would be to ungod Himself. He can do all things consistent with His holy will. Holy Will is His nature. 2 Tim. 2. 13, "He cannot deny himself." In this sense God is omnipotent. Psalm 115. 3, "Our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He pleased." Psalm 135. 6, "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deep places." Mt. 19. 26, "With God all things are possible." Luke 18. 27, "The things that are impossible with man are possible with God." The attribute of omnipotence is so self-evident that we need discuss it no further.

The same is true of His attribute of omniscience. This means that He knows all things. Without this attribute He could not be God. Prov. 15. 3, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good." Psalm 139. 1–3, "O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising. Thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways."

God is good. His goodness shines out in His love and mercy, and is also so self-evident that we need not dwell on it here. His good-

ness, His lovingkindness, His tender mercy stand forth on every page of the Bible.

Without a firm belief in these primary attributes of God, without a living and abiding experience of them, we could never have written this book. Every true believer knows by blessed experience that God is good, that His mercies are new every morning, that His lovingkindness brightens and blesses every day.

All the attributes of God are fundamental to the believer's idea and concept of God. All are fundamental to his experience of God.

CHAPTER III

The Works of God.—Revelation.

THE great, outstanding works of God are Creation, Preservation, Redemption, Renewal, and Revelation. Without the last we could not know, understand, or be helped by the other four. For this reason we consider the last first and now look at, and look into, God's work of revealing Himself, or making Himself known to man.

In chapter two we anticipated the fact of Revelation, took it for granted, and used it as argument, proof, and explanation. That chapter would not be complete without this one.

There are many errors, doubts, and misgivings as to the Bible as God's Revelation. There is bitter, determined, and persistent opposition to belief in divine Revelation. The opposition often parades itself under the guise of scholarship and critical research. Uncounted thousands, many of them good peo-

ple, have been troubled, misled, and plunged into hopeless unbelief by this opposition.

Christians still believe that God has revealed Himself and His holy will in His Word, which they call the Bible.

When we come to study man as a fallen and sinful creature, we shall see more clearly how sorely man needs a revelation from on high. When we study God's work of Creation, we shall see how the Creator reveals Himself also in nature. Here we deal with the Revelation written in the Holy Scriptures.

If we believe what is written above as to the Existence, Being, Nature, and Attributes of God, we cannot doubt that this God can reveal Himself to man. Then we also know that such a God would want the children of His creation to know what His will is concerning them. Especially would such a God want His fallen, helpless, and hopeless children to know His good and gracious will. This Revelation of Himself and of His loving purpose concerning us we have in the old, familiar Book, the Bible.

Look at it. It is made up of sixty-six separate writings, which we call the books of the Bible. It is an old Book. It was nearly a thousand and a half years before Christ when

Moses began to write. Altogether about forty different writers have taken part in writing our Bible. From the time when Moses began to write until John, the last writer, was done, a millenium and a half had rolled around and away.

These writers lived in different lands, in different ages. They did not all write in the same language. Few of them knew each other. When one was writing he did not know that—or what—another would write.

When at last, after careful, continued, and painstaking investigation, the writings of these forty men were selected out from other extant writings, they were arranged and put together, each one into its own place. They made a complete Book, a consistent Book, a Book without a self-contradiction if rightly understood.

The contents of this Book of books cover the widest range. There is not a human interest that is not touched. The deepest questions that ever troubled a human soul find in these pages a real answer. Here we have History, Biography, Poetry, Philosophy, Prophecy, Gospel, Experience, Doctrine, and Ethics. Here the seeking soul finds instruc-

tion, admonition, warning, reproof, promise, encouragement, comfort, and peace.

From beginning to end, from the promise of the seed of the woman to the last verse of John's Revelation, the Bible looks to, and centers around, one Personality. The heart, the life-nerve, the living center is the old, old story of Jesus and His love. That story, that Personality, that Character, that life, that work! In all the annals of history, in all the pages of literature, there is nothing like it. It is the life blood of the Bible. It has engaged, it has fascinated, it has amazed, it has confounded, it has overcome the keenest intellects among men. True, some wonder, doubt, and go their way.

We often think of a story that our brilliant professor, the revered and sainted Doctor Mann, once told us in class:

In the days of that distinguished and unusually bright circle of French skeptics and atheists called the Encyclopedists, at one of their evening gatherings, the conversation turned to the personality, character, and life of Jesus. One of the number expressed his wonder that such a character could have been invented and such a life portrayed and carried consistently through to such an end.

Others questioned whether such a character, life, and story could be conceived and written now. One of them claimed that he could do it. The assembly requested him to undertake the task. He agreed. He went home and went to work. He studied, investigated, planned, and arranged. He began to write. His imaginary character got into difficulties. He threw away his manuscript and began anew. Again he found that he could not carry his hero consistently through. He made a number of attempts. He failed. He came back to his congeners and said: "Gentlemen, it can't be done!"

The brilliant Frenchman was right. The unaided human mind cannot fabricate a Jesus Christ and make up His story. Another Frenchman with a wonderful imagination, with rarely paralleled gifts as a writer, did concoct a so-called Life of Jesus. Renan wrote a brilliant romance, a novel cast in the mold of Persian life. But — what a caricature! With all its bright picture-painting, many pages and paragraphs are revolting, disgusting, and impossible. The human mind cannot portray the Divine. Man cannot create God. To imagine, to fabricate Jesus Christ and His Gospel would be in a sense a

greater miracle than is the Christ Himself. No one can know man but the spirit of man that is in man. And no one can reveal the Christ of God but the Spirit of God. Jesus Christ is the outstanding center and subject of the Bible. The whole Old Testament looks forward to, and finds its explanation in, Him. The New is the Testament of Jesus Christ. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last of God's revelation. Without Him the Bible has no meaning. We believe the Bible because it gives us our Saviour. We search the Scriptures. They testify of Christ. In Christ we have the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

We look again at the Bible. This Book has been hated, assailed, and abused as has no other book in the world. The keenest intellects among men have spoken and written against it. The natural heart dislikes it. The old Adam hates it. Why? Because of its humiliations. It paints every man's true portrait. It opens up the innermost depths of his soul. It makes him out a poor, helpless, hopeless, lost, and guilty sinner. It shows him that there is no help, no hope in himself as long as he is left to himself. It demands of

him that he recognize and realize that he is a sinner, that he feel, lament, and confess his guilt. It shows him that he needs to come as a beggar holding out an empty hand, pleading for mercy; that his only hope and help is, that he fly to the Lord Jesus Christ for refuge and salvation.

To human nature, proud, self-sufficient, self-righteous, this is humiliating. It is obnoxious. The natural man hates the Book that tells him all this. He is willing to take pains, to pay money, to satisfy himself that the Old Book is not true. Like the would-be infidel in Ohio who said: "I don't believe in a hereafter. I don't believe in a hell." Then, as if musing to himself, he added: "Still I would give my best yoke of oxen if I could be sure."

Yes, men hate the Bible. They don't want to receive or believe it. Every conceivable effort has been made to discredit or destroy it. The kings of the earth have set themselves against it. Rulers have conspired together against it. Some of the mightiest emperors that ever sat upon the throne of Rome, when that throne ruled the world, set themselves the task to put out of existence every copy and every part of the Christian Scrip-

tures. They issued imperial proclamations; they sent their spies to search their lands and their inhabitants for copies or books of the Sacred writings. Wherever such a writing was found it was burned, and the owner or reader was often burned with it. And this went on for generations. But the Book lived!

We bear in mind also that in those dark days there were no printing presses. The separate books of the Scriptures existed in parchment form. The large square letters had to be carefully made and copied by hand. There were comparatively few copies in existence. Here and there a little group of believers or a rich man owned a parchment containing the Books of Moses, the Psalms, Isaiah, the Gospel of John, Paul's Letter to the Romans, or some other book of the Bible. It cost more to own one of the manuscripts than to build a house or buy a farm.

These parchments could not be hidden from sight and search as easily as can our pocket Testaments or India paper Bibles. Yet the Scriptures survived.

There existed at that time other valued writings, the products of profound and brilliant minds among the heathen. Every effort

was made that these writings might be preserved and handed down to posterity. Many of them were lost. Their names and titles alone exist.

What a contrast:

Here is one set of rare writings. Everything was done that could be done to destroy them from the face of the earth. They survived. Here are other writings. Everything was done that could be done to preserve them. They are gone.

How explain it? There is only one explanation. The same God who gave His Holy Scriptures watched over, guarded, and preserved them. He has made good His promise: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away." We have it with us still.

And we believe, teach, and confess that the Book with such other-worldly contents, with such a history, is the inspired Word of God. We believe that holy men of God spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit inspired it. Men wrote it. It is God's Book, given to us through men. Like Christ, it is both divine and human.

Every true believer can say:

I believe that it is God's Book. It reveals

so much that the unaided mind of man could never have known. It knows the hidden secrets of man's soul as the soul itself could never have known them. It knows and lays bare the secret springs of human nature as no mere unaided man could do. It found me. It discovered me to myself. It made me see and know myself as I am by nature. It showed me what I need, where and how to get what I need. It meets me in my perplexity. It leads me into the light of a better world. Out of the darkness and death of sin, into the light and life of grace. It takes me to the wells of Salvation. It holds to my parched lips the living water. When I am weak and weary it feeds me with the manna of God, the Bread of Life from heaven. I am satisfied. My cup runneth over.

Is it too much to claim for such a Book that it has God for its author, that it has Christ for its subject, that it has salvation for its end? It is—yes, it really is — the only Book on earth that was edited in heaven. This is fundamental.

But it might still be asked: What shall we say to the multitudinous, widespread, and popular criticism of the Bible? We might answer that this is nothing new. Faultfinding

criticism of God and of His Word is as old as the Garden of Eden. The devil was the first destructive critic. In every age of history hostile criticism has raised its head and made its claims. Modern negative criticism is offering little or nothing that is new. It is in the main rehashing the deistical arguments so rife in England in the eighteenth century and the more scholarly and subtle arguments of German Rationalism of a hundred years ago. It is threshing out old straw. All of its worth-while arguments have been scrutinized, criticized, answered, and refuted again and again. They have not overthrown a single clear fact or doctrine of the old Bible.

The Bible and its friends have nothing to fear. We welcome all fair and unprejudiced right criticism. Our Fundamental beliefs on this point need no further apologetic here. Our Bible is its own best apologetic. Every true believer knows by blessed experience that it is of God.

For the comfort of some possibly perplexed and doubtful reader we refer to this remarkable fact. There are scores of similar facts. They are occurring all the time.

In the days when Deism was rife and popular in England, two highly bred and cul-

tured young friends met together and talked over the questions of the day, especially as they pertained to supernatural Revelation and miracles. Both shared the general conviction that no educated, intelligent, thinking person should hold any longer the old Christian beliefs concerning the Bible and its contents. Both of them, being scholarly gentlemen of leisure, believed it their duty to help along what they believed to be a rational criticism of the contents of the Bible. They really wanted to assist in making men more intelligent by ridding them of unworthy superstitions. What could they do? After due consultation Lord Littleton set himself the task of showing that the Bible accounts of the Resurrection of Christ cannot be and are not true. Sir Gilbert West agreed that he would show up and prove the same things as to the Bible accounts of the Conversion of Paul.

Both went earnestly to work. University libraries were at their disposal. They spared neither labor nor pains. They made all the earnest and honest research that they could command. They were sincere. They wanted to know and set forth the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

What was the result?

Lord Littleton wrote a book which examined in minute detail the story of Christ's Resurrection, noted and criticized all arguments against it, vindicated the reality of the resurrection, and triumphantly proclaimed to the world his own unshakable belief that now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.

Sir Gilbert West did the same thing as to the story of Paul's conversion.

So much for honest research and criticism. The two remarkable little books of these two remarkable men have been published by The American Tract Society. Get them. Read them.

CHAPTER IV

Creation

FOR the sake of convenience, because in that which follows we need to refer to an accepted written Word of God as our final authority, we discussed Revelation before Creation. Before Creation there was no such thing as time. God was eternal. Time began with creation. In time, creation was the first great work of God.

From the earliest ages great thinkers among men have busied their brains in trying to account for the existence of the universe, of our earth, and of its inhabitants. Out of their brains these speculative thinkers have spun the most weird, fantastic, and absurd theories as to the origin of the world and of man. The mythologies, cosmogonies, and fairy tales of creation form a strange commentary on the possible aberrations of the human mind.

Over against all such vague and vain speculations we have the short, simple, straightforward creation story of the Bible.

Look at it. How meaningful the first four words of the Bible: "In the beginning God." God, the beginning. God, before all and beyond all. In the beginning God created. Before that beginning nothing existed outside of God. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

No man-made account of creation starts with a majestic ring like that. Here rings out a startling voice from another world.

We are not told when this beginning was. There is no date here. Let us not forget this. There may have been countless ages during which the earth was without form and void and when darkness was upon the face of the deep. During these primordial ages, if such there were, the Spirit of God was moving or brooding upon the waters.

After this introductory statement, which gives us the big, undated fact, we have the ordered account of the progressive creation out of the now existing chaos. We have first the creation of light and the separating of night from day. Then the separating of the firmament from the earth. Then the separating of the waters on the earth from the land. Then the calling forth of vegetation from the earth. Then the creation of the

heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, and stars. Then the fishes in the rivers and seas. Then the fowls of the air. Then the creeping things on the earth. Then the higher animals, the quadrupeds, the mammals. And then the crowning act, the creation of man in the image of God.

This is the story. Here is order; here is progress. First the earth is made fit for production, for life. Then the heavenly bodies, to give the kind of light and heat needed for vegetable and animal life. Then animals, beginning with the lowest forms, then higher and higher, genus and species, each after its kind, each reproducing its own kind.

And this is the order of science. Nature herself, God's secondary revelation, tells the same story. Geology, except where it shows results of violent upheavals, twists and breaks, reveals the same order. In the rock-layers, the strata, the internal masonry of God, Geology finds the fossils of flora and fauna in the order of the first chapter of Genesis.

Some students have been troubled by the division of the work of Creation into days. There is no real difficulty here. The Hebrew word for day is "Yom." It has various meanings in the Bible. The first chapter of Gene-

sis counts six "Yoms," or days, in the progressive story of creation. Genesis 2. 4 calls the six Yoms one: "In the day that the Lord made the earth and the heavens." In 2 Pet. 3. 8 we are admonished: "Forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day." The whole present dispensation of grace is called a day. Thus in 2 Cor. 6. 2 we read: "Behold now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." In Scripture usage the word day may mean an age-long period.

But the main thing is not the exact measure of time but the fact and work of creation. Matter is not eternal. God is. Matter could not evolve a universe like this. It is more rational to believe that God created it all. Heb. 11. 3, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

Now let us look at the creation of man, the crowning work of God.

The earth had been made ready. The Mineral Kingdom had been established and syste-

matically arranged in its bowels. The Vegetable Kingdom had covered its surface with verdure, fruit, and beauty. The Animal Kingdom had made its waters, its woods, its fields, and its air teem with living creatures. But there was as yet no earthly lord of creation. Man does not belong to, and could not fit into, any of the three Kingdoms.

One of the early, good kings of Prussia once visited a public school. He loved children. He explained to them the three Kingdoms. Then he asked the school: "Now, to which Kingdom do I belong?" A little girl held up her hand and answered: "To the Kingdom of God." She was right. For this Kingdom God made man. Every man who is not in this Kingdom is out of the place for which he was intended.

Man's creation shows this. Before God created man, He had caused the earth to bring forth life. That there might be a Vegetable Kingdom, His creative and creating Word said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth," and it was so.

And that there might be an Animal Kingdom, the same Fiat-Word said: "Let the wa-

ters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." And so the earth and its waters produced the living things, and the air was made to swarm with life and music. All this before man and for man.

Now the Creator makes a new start. His work is not yet completed. It is not yet crowned.

God pauses. He takes counsel with Himself. As if musing aloud as to this great crowning act, this special creation, He says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Had He said anything like this when He made the lower animals? No; He had made the waters and the earth bring them forth. Of man alone He says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." If this does not mean that the making of man was a separate act, a special creation, apart from and different from all the other work of creation, then language has no meaning. He says further of this His special, crowning creature: "Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

The inspired historian sums it all up and says: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." Let the reader read over again the first two chapters of his Bible. This is God-inspiring history.

Let us look briefly at man as made in the image of God. What does it mean? There has been much deep, elaborate, useless, and confusing speculation as to this. For the ordinary, average believer it is enough to know that the image, or likeness, of God, in which He made man, means that God made him with special spiritual endowments, by the right use of which he was able to know, have fellowship with, and imitate God in righteousness and holiness of truth. Luther says: "When Moses says that man was made in God's image he shows thereby that man is not only like God in having reason, or understanding, and a will, but especially that he is conformed to God, that is, he has such understanding and will as to understand God, and will what God wills."

The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, which Apology is one of the Creeds of the Lutheran Church, says: "That in man there were embodied such wisdom and righteous-

ness as apprehended God and in which God was reflected; that is, to man there were given the gifts of the knowledge of God, the fear of God, confidence in God, and the like."

We look again at man as he came forth from the hand of his Creator. As to matter or method of his making, Gen. 2. 7 tells us: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." God made man of two parts: a body and a soul. God formed the body out of the dust of the ground. As to his body, man's origin is from the soil; it is of the earth, earthy.

One of the younger of the natural sciences, Chemistry, has demonstrated that there is not an element or substance in man's body that is not found in the soil of the earth. The physical body is closely related to the ground. True science always agrees with the Word of God. God's works cannot contradict God's Word.

"Mother Earth" is what man often calls the ground. It is a good name. To man's body the earth is a good mother. She provides abundantly for his bodily life. Is he hungry? The earth provides vegetables, grains, and fruits. His meat he gets from earth-nourished

creatures. Is he thirsty? The earth furnishes water and other drinks distilled from her plants and fruits. Does he need clothing? The cotton and the flax, the silk and the wool, from earth-nourished creatures, provide him. Does he need shelter, a place for rest and comfort? From the mines and forests he gets material to build him a home in which to prepare his food and to furnish heat when needed. Does he have the desire for sex? Male and female created He them. Yes, man's body was made from earth. It can live from the earth. When man's bodily life is ended, Mother Earth opens her bosom; and the body, till the resurrection morn, goes back, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

We are not done with man. We are not Materialists. Neither are we Sadduccees. God was not done with man after He had formed his body out of the dust of the ground. Into that earthy body God breathed His breath, the breath of life. Now after this in-breathing, there was something in man that was not out of the ground, not of the earth, earthy. Now he had in him, as part of him, something from another world, something from heaven. Now he had in him the breath of God. Now he could say: "The spirit of the

Lord hath made and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Now he was related to two worlds.

The soul is not only a part of man, but it is the chief part. The soul, thus originally made, the soul, the breath of God, makes man man. Such a soul forever differentiates man from the brute. Into what brute, into what ape, did God ever breathe a soul?

The soul has its wants, its longings, its yearnings, its upreachings, its outcryings. It has no Mother Earth. No earth, no world of man, can ever satisfy the soul. The Bread of Life, the bread from heaven, the manna from above, alone can satisfy soul-hunger. The Water of Life alone, Christ's living and life-giving Water alone, can satisfy soul-thirst. The robe of Christ's righteousness alone can fitly clothe the soul. And the resurrection body is the house not made with hands, with which the soul will be clothed and made eternally and perfectly happy in the House of many mansions in heaven. The pleasures of the world can never satisfy the soul. The riches of the world can never still its yearnings.*

* For a further discussion of man's relation to the soil, read chapters one and two of *The Lutheran Church in the Country.*

With Shakespeare we may admire man and say: "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how expressive and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god!"

But with Augustine we can more truthfully say and pray: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God. Therefore we are without rest until we rest in Thee."

The Bible story of the creation of man, the Bible view of the nature, capacity, powers, and destiny of man satisfies a reasonable man's own thinking. This explanation of man's origin and nature gives a resting place to the inquiring mind. Man can think it through and arrive at a point of peace.

But from the beginning there have been those who have been unwilling to accept God's own account of His creation. They will not believe His Word. The devil was the first agnostic, the first skeptic, the first infidel. He whispered his unbelief into the ear of Mother Eve. He made her believe that God is not good, that His Word is not true, that to disobey, to sin, would bring sense-gratification and intellectual advance and advantage. The devil perverted Eve, she perverted

Adam. The race that was in Adam's loins fell.—Of this more hereafter when we study sin.

From that time forth the children of Adam, as long as they were in their natural state, unchanged, unrenewed, when they knew or might have known God, "they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things...For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever." Read Romans 1. 16–32. Here you find God's inspired delineation of Darwinian Evolution.

Naturalistic, materialistic evolution professes to describe, to portray, to set forth in an elaborate system, the origin, development, and progress of man. It utterly ignores God's Revelation. It goes on the supposition that man must dig out, and make up, his own history. That for which he can find no historic basis, he must invent, hypothesize; and then,

on his own fancied hypotheses or guesses, he builds a system and calls it Science. His fellow men must accept his fabrications, his invented system, his science, falsely so-called, or be dubbed as credulous dupes, ignoramuses, followers of senseless traditions, men living in the dark ages, content with outworn creeds and wilfully blind to the new light of this new age.

The writer of this, along with thousands of other sincere, serious, and earnest seekers after truth, utterly repudiates such arrogant epithets. There is, and has been, more persistent, prayerful, painstaking search and research for truth on the part of conservative Christians than on the part of flippant, credulous unbelievers and liberals.

We cannot here enter into a full discussion of Darwinian Evolution. This would not fit into the province or plan of this book. Since, however, evolution is so persistent in its propaganda, since it is so insidiously instilled into our children and youth from the public kindergarten up through grammar grades, high schools, state Normals, and universities, we cannot entirely ignore it.

We can only enumerate, and call attention to a few of its positions that have been pointed

out by so many of its able opponents as utterly unscientific: We charge the proponents and defenders of naturalistic evolution that they have utterly failed to show what was, or to explain, the origin of matter or force or life.

They have utterly failed to show how the lifeless clod could produce vegetable life. They have utterly failed to show how vegetable life could evolve into, or produce, sentient animal life.

They have utterly failed to show how mere sentient animal life could evolve into, or produce life, intellectual life, or how mere intellectual life could evolve into, or produce, spiritual life, life in conscious, happy, blessed communion with God. They fail to account for a Christian man. Look again at their lower failures.

They have utterly failed to show how the invertebrate animals could, or did, evolve into the vertebrates. They have utterly failed to show that one species ever evolved into another. They have been challenged again and again to show a single instance. They have none. When a hybrid or neutral, like the mule, is produced, that hybrid is sterile. Evolutionists have failed to show a single ex-

ception. Nature jealously guards her species. Each species brings forth according to God's original fiat "after its kind."

Natural Evolutionists have no explanation even of the origin of physical man. There is not a scintilla of evidence that man has evolved from the ape. All research, all investigation, all evidence, shows that man, as we have portrayed him above, did not, and could not, evolve from a brute. The missing link is still missing! It will be.

No, no. Unassisted Nature knows and shows no push from below upward. There must ever be a pull from above upward. There is, there can be, no spontaneous generation. The lifeless cannot generate life. Life can only come from life. Natural and materialistic Evolution is unscientific.

The old Creation story is scientific. It answers a thousand questions before which godless naturalists and scientists are dumb. It

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For further light on Evolution we advise the every-day man or woman to read:

"The First Page of the Bible," by Bettex.

"Evolution," by Prof. Th. Graebner.

"Evolution at the Bar," by Philip Mauro.

"In His Image," by Wm. Jennings Bryan.

"Q. E. D., or New Light on the Doctrine of Creation," by George McCready Price. Also his; "Back to the Bible."

"The Lie of the Age," by Wm. Shoeler.

satisfies sanctified common sense. To the renewed mind it is the highest reason.

The Creation of Angels.

We have studied Creation especially as it is related to, and includes, man. We have looked at the material things and the physical creatures. But there are also existences that are neither material nor visible. There are beings that do not have bodies like ours. There are spiritual beings that are called angels. They are creatures. God created them. He created all that exists. We do not have the story of God's creation of the angels. God did not reveal it to us as He did the story of His creation of man. The story of man's creation looked forward to the story of man's redemption. Good angels never needed to be redeemed. Bad angels could not be redeemed. For angels no Saviour died. Christ did not take upon Himself the form of an angel, but He was made in the likeness of man, in the likeness of sinful flesh. Angels are in a separate class. They are not, as creatures, related to the human family. This may be a reason why God did not give us a full account of their creation. But God did reveal the fact of their creation. In Col. 1. 16 we read:

"For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him." This is all we know of the fact. It is enough.

The angels are spirits or spiritual beings. Sometimes God enables them to take on bodily form. They have the attributes of personality. The Bible shows that they stand high in intelligence, in powers of mind and reason. They do not possess divine attributes or powers. They are neither omnipresent nor omniscient. They are immortal. As God made them, they were all sinless and holy. Good angels are still so. They are a mighty host. In numbers they are countless. Dan. 7. 10: "Thousands of thousands ministered unto him and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." Mt. 26. 53: "He shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels." There are ranks among them. There are angels and archangels. Michael and Gabriel are archangels. There are principalities and powers in heavenly places.

The angels are all ministering spirits. They serve God day and night. They behold His face, await His commands, go on His errands

of protection, rescue, help, and render services to man. The Bible is full of beautiful references and stories of their loving ministries to the children of God. We can refer to but a few. Angels were present and interested in Creation. They had a part in giving the Law. A host of them protected Elisha, slew the Assyrians, and fought against the prince of Persia. They were especially interested in God's great work of Redemption. They desire to look into its mysteries. An angel announced the birth of Christ. An angel choir sang the first Christmas anthem. An angel protected the Infant Saviour. They ministered to Him in His temptation and in His agony in Gethsemane. They rolled away the stone from the sepulcher, announced His Resurrection, His Ascension, and His coming again to Judgment. In the Judgment they will take a prominent part.

Time and room would fail us to tell of their loving ministries to Abraham, and to Lot, and Jacob; to Daniel, to Lazarus, to Peter, and Paul. And eternity alone will reveal how often these unknown, unseen ministers of mercy came down from heaven, protected endangered children, rescued God's redeemed ones, and helped them over hard places. In

heaven, dear reader, you and I will learn something of how often these our invisible guardians saved us from perishing.

Yes, it is still true, however much we may forget or ignore it; it is a precious comfort of God that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and deliveth them." God still gives "His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." All His angels are "ministering spirits." He sends them forth to minister to, to serve "them that are heirs to salvation." How much we lose when we forget the comforting, fundamental doctrine of the angels!

There is another — an unpleasant — fact about the angels that we dare not leave out nor forget. God has revealed it. We dare not ignore or doubt God's facts.

It seems to be in the mind, plan, and purpose of God that He will give to all His rational creatures an opportunity of being tested and a power of choice. In God's mind this seems to be necessary to develop His creatures, to strengthen them, to make them free moral agents.

The angels also had their testing time. Jude in verse 6 speaks of "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own

habitation." This states the fact. From other Scripture passages we gather that a chief, a prince, fell from his high estate. Jesus says, Lk. 10. 18, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." In Mt. 12. 24 he is called "the prince of the demons." Paul intimates that this prince, this leader fell through pride: 1 Tim. 3. 6. "Lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." Jesus calls him "a liar" and "a murderer from the beginning." It seems that a multitude of the heavenly host were deceived and contaminated by him. They joined him in his rebellion. They became "his angels." They were organized into "his kingdom." With their chief they were cast out of heaven. Since man's creation they have busied themselves tempting men to evil and trying to drag them into their own sin and guilt and condemnation. Milton brought his powerful imagination to bear on this other-world tragedy and its consequences, and wrote what is, in many respects, the most wonderful epic poem ever conceived or composed by man. Milton was not inspired, but he had studied deeply and earnestly the inspired record of God. We cannot follow him in all his details, but we can learn much from him.

There is a real devil. He has great power. He is the "strong man armed." But he is not omnipotent. God is stronger. Neither is the devil omniscient. Nor is he omnipresent. But he has a well-organized kingdom. Legions of swift, subservient devils are under him, doing his bidding. Through them he brings his power to bear and tempts whom he will. He loves the shining mark. He aims high. He wants to get the leaders, the key-men. He is persistently out after ministers of the Gospel, theological students, Christian leaders, deaconesses, Sunday-school and church workers. He works not only through under-devils, but also through devilish men. He tempted Eve and Job and Saul and David. He tempted Christ and Peter, and Judas and Paul. Personally and through his under-imps he is still "going to and fro in the earth" and "walking up and down in it." He still "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

We know that in our day belief in the existence of a personal devil is scoffed at as a superstition unworthy of an intelligent man. But we know also that his real existence, his inexpressibly heinous character, his fiendish, hellish work, his unspeakable danger to every

son and daughter of man have a big place in the Bible from its first pages to its last. If what the Bible says of a real devil and his work and danger is not true, how do I know that anything else is true? He no doubt rejoices in the widespread disbelief in his own existence. What could be more welcome to him than such unbelief? The men who believe that there is no devil will never be on their guard against him. They are open to all his attacks. They become his easy prey. He laughs.

In this, as in all things taught in the Bible, belief in a personal devil and in his invisible kingdom of darkness helps us to understand the ongoings in this old world of ours. We have often said that if we did not believe in a devil we should be dumbfounded with our morning paper. Every issue is stained and befouled with stories of vice and crime, cruelty and debauchery, that are enough to give one a perpetual horror. How can we understand such doings and undoings of man? How can man, with such God-given endowments and capacities, sink so low? How can he lower himself below the brute? How can he be such a fiend? Oh, the inhumanities of man!

I go back to the old Book. It tells me of

the powers of darkness that work in and through men and women who love darkness rather than light. It tells me how such people wilfully turn their backs on God, on His teachings, on His goodness and truth; how they say of the blessed and Holy One, who would fain save them and their sin-steeped companions, "Let us break his bands asunder; let us cast away his cords from us." They yield themselves to the devil and his angels. They become children of the devil. They do the works of the devil. They are earthy, sensual, devilish. Inspiration has painted their portrait in the short Epistle of Jude, in 2 Peter, chapter 2, and in Romans 1. I restudy these divine descriptions. I recall the passages quoted above. I have an answer; I have an explanation to the otherwise distracting question, How can man be such a fiend incarnate? Now I can understand the gruesome human horrors chronicled by my morning paper. There is a devil. His "powers of darkness" are "working in the children of disobedience." "An enemy hath done this." Without him and his hellish influence man could not, and would not, fall so low.

The light of Revelation dispels the dark-

ness. Humanity is relieved. The old Book solves the problem.

Belief in the existence of the devil and in his evil angels is so Biblical and so helpful to my poor understanding that it is fundamental.

CHAPTER V

God's Work of Providence.

By God's Providence we mean His protecting and directing care over all things that He has created. To us finites it seems only natural that the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, and of all that is in them, should always be interested in all that He brought into being. It seems but natural that He should care for, rule, and govern all His works and all His creatures for their good and for His own glory.

It would seem unnatural, it would be hard to believe, that the God that we believe in should, or consistently could, after the idea of the old Deists, create and arrange all this, and then withdraw from it, and leave it to itself without care or guidance or protection from Him who made it.

Still more absurd and unbelievable would it be for us to look upon our God as making Himself an immanent part of His creation, identifying Himself with it, so that nature, as we know it, would be God and God would

be nature. This is the teaching of Pantheism. It is a widespread and popular world-view. It is held by multitudes among the so-called high-brows. It runs through Eddyism and Theosophy. Such muddled thinking, such absurd conceptions are a disgrace to the human intellect. Of all who try to make themselves swallow such absurdities God says: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

Our God is ever active over and in His creation. His power directs all. His influence is in all. He implanted the necessary, permanent forces in His created works. These forces are part of His creation. He does not need to continue to create. "The heavens and the earth were finished." Living things were made after their kind to reproduce and propagate their kind. No further direct creation was needed.

The Providence of God sustains and regulates inanimate nature. Ps. 119. 90, "Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth." Heb. 1. 3, "Upholding all things by the word of his power." Col. 7. 17, "By him all things consist." Is. 29. 6, "Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of Hosts with thunder and with earthquake and great noise, with storm

and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire." Psalm 107. 25, 29, "For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind." "He maketh the storm a calm." Psalm 148. 8, "Fire and hail, snow and vapor, stormy wind fulfilling his word." Ez. 13. 11, "There shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall."

We might go on quoting passage after passage showing that God watches over, directs and controls nature and its elemental forces. Seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night are from Him.

His Providence extends also over animate nature. Psalm 104. 10, 11, "He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst." (Read the whole wonderful Psalm and look up the reference passages.)

Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount points His disciples to the grass and flowers which God so beautifully clothes and to the birds which He feeds. God hears the cry of the raven, He notes the fall of the sparrow. The Bible is full of assurances that God watches over all vegetation and over all animal life.

Thus all nature is constantly preaching the beauty, the goodness, the wisdom of God.

To note God's interest in, and care for, His whole creation is an edifying study. There would not be so much of this in our Bible if the study of it were not good for us. But our highest interest is reached when we study God's Providence as it relates to man.

It takes in all humanity. "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?" This refers to mankind. Is. 40. 15, 17, 22, "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance . . . All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity . . . It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers." God rooted out the corrupt and corrupting Canaanites and divided their land to the twelve tribes. He had divided the earth to the sons of Noah. Ps. 67. 4, "Thou shalt govern the nations upon earth." Bible Story and Poetry and Prophecy are filled full with God's providence and rulership over the nations. All lands and all their peoples are under His control.

For His own wise and good reasons, which

we finite creatures cannot always understand, He has favored some nations above others. It is His good and gracious will that the more favored nations shall lift up and bless the less favored. Here also: "To whomsoever much is given, of him will much be required." The nation of Israel was favored in order that it might be a light-bearer and a life-bringer to the other nations of the earth.

And we believe that it is just as true that among modern nations, America is the favored one, the chosen of God, to blaze the way for, and to lift up the other nations of the world. America should ever show the other nations that national greatness is national goodness. So, in God's great world plan of Providence, can America work out her true destiny.

From general we pass to special Providence, or Providence as it concerns the individual. Here our interest grows. We come to self-interest. The question for every one now is: Does God know, notice, and care for me? Is my life, are my ways, directed by Him? From the multitude of Scripture passages we select a few to show that from the cradle to the grave our God watches over us. To every one who sincerely accepts His Word, He says, "Yea, I have loved thee with an

everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn thee." Job 10. 8, "Thy hands have framed me and fashioned me." Jer. 1. 5, "Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee." Prov. 20. 24, "A man's goings are of Jehovah. How then can man understand his way?" James 4. 13–15, "Come now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow . . . Ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that." Ps. 37. 23, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." Yes, God knows me. He loves me. The very hairs of my head are all numbered. If He so clothe the grass of the field, will He not much more clothe me? And when danger threatens, I read Psalms 23 and 91, and recall Isaiah 43, 2, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." I read Mt. 6. 19–34 and Romans 8. 31–39. Yes, there is a special Providence, and I am counted in. As I

learned above, He uses His angels to protect and serve me.

I recall what I learned above about the nature, being, and attributes of God. This God is my God. He can do for me whatsoever He will. He can work miracles. He did work them, and He does work them. They are not contrary to, but above, nature. Nature is not above God, but God is above nature. From man's viewpoint, God Himself, His existence, nature, and being, is the miracle of miracles. When God was manifested in the flesh, the miracle of miracles was manifested. If I believe in God, in His manifestation of Himself in Christ, in His inspiring prophets and apostles who write of Him, then I believe in miracles. It would be the height of absurdity to believe in God and not believe in miracles.

To the God that I believe in I can pray. My God can and does, in His own way and on His own conditions, answer prayer. Every true believer knows by experience that God has answered his prayers. We know that He heareth us.

"Yes, I can sing: "I'm a miracle of grace."

"I that was all defiled by sin,
An outcast from my God:
I that had crucified the Son

And trampled on His blood;
What strange, perplexing grace is this
That such a soul finds room!
My Saviour takes me by the hand
And kindly bids me come."

This is miracle. This is answer to prayer.

We cannot pass by the relation of foreknowledge and predestination to Providence. Here many earnest souls have found perplexity. Many have been punged into doubt.

We cannot in this place enter into an abstract, dogmatic discussion of this deep and perplexing problem. Scientific Dogmatics often darkens counsel with words. We are writing for the common man. As stated above, we cannot and do not expect to understand, measure, or judge the whole mind of God. We do not and cannot expect by searching to find out the Almighty to perfection. Enough has been revealed to satisfy a renewed and sanctified mind and heart. Enough to direct a sanctified will. We neither want, nor do we profess, a knowledge that is wise above what is written; such knowledge puffeth up.

It is helpful always to remember that there is a real difference between foreknowing and foreordaining. Foreknowledge does not bind or coerce. Foreordination does. It belongs

to the very nature of God to foreknow all. But what to us would be future, to God is present. With God there is neither past nor future. All is the eternal present. We speak after the fashion of man when we say that God foresaw all the future. But this cannot mean that God willed and foreordained all that He knew would take place. He knew that evil would come. He knew that sin with all its untold and untellable consequences would take place. But to say that He willed or foreordained all this would be to deny His holiness and goodness. On the other hand, when God foresaw all the good He also willed and foreordained it. In this His knowledge and will were in harmony. In this sense He predestined the good but not the evil. Even in thought we dare not admit that evil or sin had its origin in the mind and will of God.

The problem of the existence of moral evil we simply cannot understand. To do so we should have to be as infinitely wise as God is wise. "Here we know in part and we prophesy (or teach) in part; when that which is perfect is come, then, (and not till then), shall that which is in part (or imperfect), be done away." We do know that God hates sin

and therefore could not will to create sin. Let this suffice. Let us humbly believe and adore.

Sin and evil came from the outside. Sin originated in a creature. As we have seen, the devil brought it into heaven. Then he introduced it into the human race when the race was yet in Adam's loins. Of this, more hereafter.

God has done all that He consistently could do to save man from sin and its baleful consequences. This we shall see more clearly when we study Redemption.

We cannot well leave this topic, however, without a brief glance at the related doctrine of God's election of Grace. In this also we must still take for granted and anticipate teachings that belong to, and must be discussed more fully when we take up the great subject of Redemption. In touching on it here as related to God's Providence, we postulate and emphasize our firm conviction that salvation is all of Grace. Every one who ever was, or ever will be, saved will attribute the beginning, the progress, and the completion of his salvation to the free and unmerited Grace of his merciful God. On this fundamental point, all sound and consistent Lutheran theologians agree.

With this basis ever in mind we look at the doctrine of election.

That there is a doctrine of election in the New Testament cannot be denied. To cut out every reference to this subject in the New Testament would mean to blot out much of what is most precious, most helpful, and most comforting in the whole Bible. Election is in the Bible. The New Testament is full of it. God has put it there. What does it mean? What all does it include? We survey the successive steps.

We believe, teach, and confess:

1. That God loved and loves every human soul.

2. That God provided a Redeemer, who purchased salvation for every soul.

3. That God sent His Holy Spirit into the world to offer the purchased salvation to all.

4. That the Holy Spirit offers, and applies this salvation through the Means that God Himself has ordained for this end.

5. That these Means are the Word of God and the two Sacraments of Christ, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

6. That man has in himself the melancholy power to refuse the Means, to wilfully absent himself from them and to wilfully and

persistently resist their divine power, when their influence is brought to bear upon him.

7. That when man thus wilfully and persistently neglects or resists these Means, he thereby puts himself into the class of the non-elect.

8. That man has the power to go where the Means are dispensed and offered, and to diligently and prayerfully use them; that by so doing he is doing what he can do and what God wants him to do toward his own salvation.

9. That when he does this, then, he does not renew himself, but the Holy Spirit, through the Means of Grace, renews and sanctifies him.

10. That when thus renewed and in process of sanctification, he is one of God's elect and saved ones. It is all of free Grace.

This we believe is the helpful and comforting New Testament teaching on election. It will be better understood and more deeply appreciated when we study man's Redemption and Renewal.

Before we close our brief and cursory study of God's work in Providence we need to note briefly the afflictions and sufferings that come so often and so perplexingly upon God's children. They certainly do come. They cer-

tainly do sorely vex the very saints of God. Inspired and uninspired men have written their Theodicies. A Theodicy is an attempted justification of God's dealings with men when He allows them to suffer so sorely. The Book of Job is a wonderful, inspired Theodicy. Psalm 73 is a shorter one. Psalm 34 is helpful. The latter half of Romans 8 is a triumphant Theodicy. In Hebrews 12. 1–13 we have an instructive and a comforting Theodicy. Here we are so gently reminded that in God's sight we are but shortsighted children, and that even when we don't understand we need corrective chastening.

This precious passage will help us to appreciate the many other passages so rich in heavenly comfort.

We must also bear in mind that we bring many afflictions upon ourselves by our sins. We then reap what we ourselves have sown. Such self-incurred suffering we cannot and dare not attribute to the mysterious providence of God. We brought it upon ourselves. Let us not blame it on God.

But there are losses and crosses that come directly or indirectly from the loving heart and hand of God. These are disciplinary. They belong to the "all things" that God

makes to work together for our good. They are a loving Father's chastenings. They are intended for our profit.

A widowed father had an only child — a precious little daughter. She was stricken with a serious malady. Her life trembled in the balance. The physician was entreated to spare no pains or cost to save the sufferer. He shook his head. He said there might be one drastic, last resort. He hesitated to tell it to the bowed and broken father. The father demanded to know. The doctor said: "Every fifteen minutes, for twelve hours, you must immerse her in a tub of ice water. It may save her, it may not."

The father plunged her in. She shivered and whimpered. He did it again and then again, she clung to him, she begged most piteously, "Papa, don't do it again." He steeled himself. He shivered and suffered a thousand times more than the child. He kept on. Over night his hair grew snowy white. Before dawn the fever broke. Perspiration came. The child was saved. Oh, the love that drove that father to so afflict that child!

Our heavenly Father does not suffer in making us suffer. He afflicts but not willingly. He chastens out of love. Let us trust Him.

PART II
SIN

CHAPTER VI

Sin

HEATHEN, without a missionary, without a Bible, know that there must be some kind of a god or gods. They are conscious that for some reason their gods or higher powers are not pleased with them. There is something in them that the gods don't like. This is an unwritten revelation in their nature. Their conscience bears witness that there is something wrong with themselves. They are not what they ought to be. There is some bad element in them that makes their gods angry. This consciousness of indwelling badness keeps out peace and joy. Heathen are not happy. There is a sad cast of countenance on all heathen peoples. The deep, settled, melancholy look on their faces betrays an inner want, an inner weight, an inner pain even when they laugh. Their laughter is not hearty, free and ringing, like that of a Christian.

There is a minor key in all their music. Whether they try to sing or play there is a plaintive undertone. It is the wail of an aching heart, the outcrying and up-yearning for a paradise lost, the homesickness for a lost home.

Luthardt in Lecture VII of his *Fundamental Truths of Christianity* sets forth the significant fact that in all the ancient, ethnic literatures there is this undertone of sadness, this homesickness for a lost home. Everywhere there are dim, deep-seated traditions of a golden age, a happy home, a blessed life in the beginnings of the race. Reminiscences and longings are blended through the testimonies of the ages. The story of humanity, the laying bare of the open heart of humanity, is all one continuous sad tale, the never ceasing wail, iterating and reiterating the tragic fact that there is something desperately wrong, clamoring out the eternal quest and question: Who will show us any good?

And what of the quest and the test of today? Who can adequately describe the unrest, the wild rush for external diversion, amusement, excitement? Why is the mass of our young people so restless and discontented unless there is a nightly date for a show,

a feast, a bridge-party, a dance, a joy-ride? Why is a quiet evening at home, with cultured companions, with church papers, good, pure, uplifting books, and the old Bible, now so generally counted a bore? Why the widespread distaste for an evening at church? What's wrong with the world? What ails the human heart? What possesses our young people? Is there no cure for these ailments? Is there no balm in Gilead; no physician there?

Remedies have been and are being offered. The proffered remedies promise satisfaction. Restless, roving, running humans are told that pleasures will gratify and satisfy. They fail. Too often they leave the aching head and end in the breaking heart. The discontented ones are told that riches, honor, position, power will solace the ills. These also fail and leave behind a wreckage of disappointment and despair.

The seeker after satisfaction is often told that he must look higher and deeper. Worldly wisdom, philosophy, culture — these are the cure-alls for him. Again there is illusion, there is disappointment. The aching void remains. The deeper longings and yearnings still possess the soul.

The remedies fail because the disease has not been rightly diagnosed. Worldly wisdom cannot do this. God alone can do it. He made the world. He knows what is wrong with it. He made man. He knows what ails humanity. He tells us in the old Book. It shows us, from its first pages to its last, that the one all-conditioning fundamental ailment of humanity is

Sin.

Sin makes every man sinful. Sin makes the whole man sinful. Sin makes the flesh lustful, makes the heart impure, makes the mind unclear, makes the will perverse. Sin is everything that is out of harmony with God's will. Sin alienates from God; is abhorrent to Him. Sin makes man conscious of guilt. Sin brings man all that restlessness and unhappiness depicted above. Sin is the great tragic fact in humanity. Ignoring it will not obliterate it. Denying it will not do away with it. It is here. It rankles in every bosom. It worketh hitherto in every heart. It manifests itself in every life. It meets us at every turn. It glares at us in the headlines of our daily paper. It is the great tragedy of the world.

Whence Is sin?

We have seen that it cannot by any possibility be from God. We have seen that when God made His first intelligent personal creatures He endowed them with a rational mind and a free will. We have seen that He has made it part of His plan that such creatures should undergo a testing and so be developed, strengthened and perfected in their moral nature. We have seen that in some way, inscrutable to our finite minds, evil entered into one of the chiefs of the angels and corrupted him;* that when he had fallen he tempted and corrupted other angels. Sin started in heaven, but was banished from there.

The first fallen angel, the devil, brought sin into our world. When the human race was all in Adam, the devil tempted him and made him fall.

We look again into the sad, old, unvarnished, artless, short, simple story of humanity's fall into sin. The natural man does not like this story.

From the beginning it has been ridiculed, denied, perverted, misconstrued, and misun-

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*Read or reread the author's "What's Wrong with the World."

derstood. But after all that has been said, written, speculated, and invented, the story is the only explanation that explains. It is the only real and full answer to the questions, What's wrong with human nature? What's wrong with the world? The Bible story requires candid, careful examination. It is often flippantly and irreverently referred to as the taking and eating of a forbidden apple. The story of the forbidding of an apple is held forth as an act ridiculous in itself, and its penalty is utterly unworthy of God. The taking and eating is held up as so natural, and so inconsequential that it is at its worst but a trifling thing. Such has ever been the superficial and flippant way of Rationalism and unbelief. Let us look more closely into the story of the Temptation and Fall.

We note that God had made and fitted out a most delightful place of habitation for man. Read again Genesis 2. 8–15. It was neither a wild forest nor a treeless prairie. It was a garden. It was well watered by three rivers. Under its soil were gold and precious stones. The garden was planted and prepared for man's enjoyment. Every tree that was pleasant to the eye and good for food was there.

God was lavish in his lovingkindness to His crowning creature.

God was generous in His permissions. Man was told that he might eat of every tree save one. The prohibition of one was for man's testing and developing.

Into this garden comes the tempter. Note his wiles. He approaches the weaker vessel. He engages her in conversation. He withdraws her attention from all the permitted trees. He focuses her attention on the one forbidden tree. She lingers, she listens, she looks, she contemplates, she admires, she realizes that the tree is good for food, that it is pleasant to the eyes, that it is to be desired to make one wise. The devil is implanting the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Sin is rooting as she lingers to listen.

The devil awakens a suspicion that God is not good. "Yea, hath God said that ye shall not eat of every tree?" Is God restricting your liberty? Suspicion is started. Suspicion starts doubt. Doubt starts unbelief. Unbelief is the root of all sin.

The devil has Eve prepared for the second fatal step: If God is not good, then perhaps His Word is not true. To be very frank, it

is not true. Hear his boldness, "Ye shall not surely die." Oh, this liar from the beginning! This originator of unbelief. This first negative critic of God's Word.

He has implanted unbelief. He has Eve ready for the last bold step. Why should she obey a God who is not good and who is not true? Break His bands asunder! Cut loose from Him! Disobey! So you will be free. You will be wise!

Eve believed the devil rather than God. She obeyed the devil and disobeyed God. She had broken with God. The virus of unbelief and disobedience had entered her soul. She at once became devilish. Having herself broken away from God and become a rebel, she wanted Adam to become like herself and also break away from God. Imitating the devil, she tempted Adam. As the devil had made her fall, so she makes Adam fall. Thus sin at once propagated itself. So sin has ever done. So it does to-day. Herein is its devilishness.

What a change, what a catastrophe in Paradise! Where happy Adam and Eve had awaited and walked and talked with God in the garden, they now flee, hide themselves, and cower under the bushes. Where they had

walked, erect and glad, they are now ashamed. Hiding and crouching and covered with fig leaves, terror in their souls and trembling in limb, they want to creep away from God.

Sin had come in, sin was seething and burning in their souls. They were the race. They were humanity. Diseased, defiled, condemned, appalled!

This is the short story of the genesis and growth of Sin. What a psychology! Is there anything approaching it in other ancient lore? Compare the heathen mythologies! Could unaided man have invented a story that explains so much, that answers so many otherwise unanswerable questions, that throws such a lurid light inward upon the nature of man's soul and forward upon human history? Here is an ancient philosophy, an explanation of things. Did human ingenuity ever propose a better one? No, no, this explanation stands alone. It explains. It is God's explanation of the riddle of humanity. It satisfies sanctified reason.

Now I know whence sin is! Now I know why the race is sinful! The race was in Adam's loins. When Adam fell the race fell. Now I know that sin is not all or not only in and of the flesh. Adam and Eve had flesh before they had sin. Matter in itself is not

evil. Eve's intellect was appealed to. Eve's will was perverted. Eve's flesh became full of evil lust. Now I know that Paul's dark and tragic picture in Romans VII is true, even of the regenerate. Yes, of me. Oh, how frightfully true of the unregenerate who have crushed out all their better longings and aspirations! I know whence and what sin is. I know what's wrong with the world. Paul has it all in Romans V. God's witness to me has become a witness in me.

I know that there is original Sin. There is a native depravity which I brought into the world with myself. "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." I know that we are all by nature, i. e., by our natural birth, "children of wrath," "flesh born of the flesh." From beginning to end my Bible teaches and takes for granted the sad fact of original sin.

Human reason may clamor against this unwelcome teaching. Human pride may rebel against its humiliation. A shallow optimism may deride it. Liberalists may shriek out their assertions that such a belief belongs to the dark ages, that it is unworthy of the twentieth century, that it ought not once to be named among enlightened Americans. Truth is still truth. Sinful human nature

may wince under it. Neither reason, nor pride, nor unbelief in any form can wipe out a fact. They cannot shriek a fact out of existence. Facts are still fundamental.

That from birth on there is an evil bias, a tendency toward, and a preference for, the bad is patent to every open and unbiased mind. Without a teacher the child learns the bad. To learn the good, to love what God loves, requires constant teaching, training, watching, warning, and luring. Why? Depravity is native.

The wages of sin is death. Dying, thou shalt die. All pain, all suffering is a prevenient dying and as such a wage, a result of sin. Where there is no sin there can be neither sickness nor death. Innocent angels neither suffer nor die. Neither do the spirits of just men made perfect. In the New Jerusalem there is no sin. There "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." "There shall be neither sorrow, nor crying, nor death." No sin there. No baby would ever get sick or die if it were sinless. Facts are stubborn things.*

The acceptance of the full, sad teaching of the Bible on Sin is fundamental.

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*Read chapters I and II of "The Way of Salvation in the Lutheran Church."

PART III
REDEMPTION

CHAPTER VII

The Redeemer

THE terrible tragedy had taken place. The progenitors of the human race were fallen creatures. In intellect, in will, in flesh, they had broken with God. Their physical, mental, and moral nature had become corrupt. The race to be was as yet in them. We were in Adam. Therefore,

"In Adam's fall
We sinned all."

At once Adam and Eve were conscious of the tragic change. Heretofore they had been the happy companions of God. God had walked with them and talked with them in the garden. Now all is changed. In conscious guilt they flee. They hide under the bushes. They make themselves aprons of fig-leaves. They do not want to see God. They

do not want God to see them. Sinful, corrupt, guilty, they can no longer abide His pure presence. They are lost.

Left to themselves they would have fallen deeper and ever deeper. They would have wandered farther and ever farther. As the first prodigals they would have gone down among the swine.

They neither contemplated nor took a single step back toward God. But God had compassion. His great loving heart yearned for His lost children. He pitied them. He sought them. He called them. He found them. He showed them that the sin and guilt were all their own. He brought them to repentance and then—oh, blessed fact!—in the seed of the woman He promised them a Redeemer.

From that time forward began that long course of preparation. God began to prepare a fallen race for redemption. Outside of Eden God began to school and discipline the race. The pedagogy of God runs through the Old Testament.

As noted in the Introduction, outside the gates of God's garden the race divided. One part elected to follow the faith of Abel. The other part elected to walk in "the way of

Cain." Later on came the great division between Judaism and Heathenism. The latter carried forth some traditions from the cradle of the race. As we have seen, they never could altogether forget four great basic truths. Throughout their age-long, dreary wanderings, God was disciplining the heathen. He was teaching them two great essential lessons: First, that with all its nature worship, with all its culture in art, in philosophy, in civilization, in statecraft, and in state religion, humanity cannot redeem itself from corruption and guilt, and cannot make a moral and happy world. Second, that, despairing of self-salvation, humanity must look for redemption from above.

Judaism also had to learn needed lessons: First, that they could not save themselves by virtue of inherent superiority, nor by the mere fact that God had highly favored them and had given them a written Revelation. The fact that they were Abraham's seed would not in itself save them. Not even the divine law nor their own efforts after an external and artificial obedience could save them. The law could only be their pedagogue to show them their sin and to drive them to a prophesied, God-given Redeemer.

This was God's plan. This is His covenant. Unaided human wisdom could never have devised it. Reason may find fault and criticise. Reason cannot measure the mind of God. A sanctified reason, a reason enlightened and renewed by the Holy Ghost, studies, admires, and adores the manifold wisdom of God. The individual Christian searches and sees and says: Yes, this fits me; this saves me; this satisfies me. What I cannot comprehend I leave to His inscrutable wisdom. The judge of all the earth has done right. So from Genesis 3. 15 to John 3. 16 the great scheme of God unfolds. In the fulness of time the seed of the woman is revealed as the only begotten Son of God. It was love that promised the seed to ruined man. It was love that prepared the heathen world to see its need of redemption. It was love that prepared redemption through the Jewish world. It was love that provided a Redeemer. It was love that led Him to come gladly.

The Redeemer had no earthly father. He was born of a virgin mother. Joseph was His fosterfather. He adopted the son of his betrothed virgin. Joseph thus became the legal father of Jesus. In law Joseph had the rights and responsibilities of a father. The inspired

story tells us how nobly he carried his self-assumed responsibilities.

Those who deny Revelation, inspiration, and miracle have vehemently attacked the teaching of the virgin birth. To a true Christian who has experienced the Grace that comes through inspired Revelation, who knows himself to be a miracle, a miracle of Grace, there is no difficulty in the miracle of the virgin birth. He asks only what is written.

He knows that Isaiah prophesied (7. 14), "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son." He knows that an angel promised a Son to Mary while she was yet a virgin. Luke 1. 35, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." And Matthew 1. 19 says that after His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, "she was found with child of the Holy Spirit." And so the Word became flesh. He was born of a woman, born under the law. So the Christian reverently confesses: I believe in Jesus Christ, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary.

How beautifully all this fits into the whole

New Testament portrayal of Christ. He is the miracle of miracles. Why shouldn't His conception and birth be a miracle? What a fitting start it is for that exceptional earthly career! What natural mind could have conceived it? This altogether unique, this otherworldly, earthly beginning prepares us for all that is to follow. We know in advance that we are to have a God-man for a Saviour, a Saviour who can save—save to the uttermost. There is a heavenly naturalness in the supernatural. It prepares for, and fits into, the precious Christmas story. It fits the first Christmas sermon, preached by an angel. It fits the first Christmas anthem, sung by an angel choir. It fits our minds and hearts into the Christmas spirit. It tinges and tones the whole year with Christmas. It fits the short, simple, straightforward story of the infancy of the Holy Child.

The Emperor on the world's throne had to help make Micah's prophecy come true. The shepherds visited the manger crib. They saw the little Lord Jesus. They become lay-preachers and "made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child." This was preaching the good tidings. He who "was made of a woman, made under

the law," was circumcised on the eighth day according to the law. He was purified in the temple on the fortieth day according to the law. Simeon took the little Lord Christ in his arms and indited our Nunc Dimittis. Anna, coming into the temple at that instant, "gave thanks, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." A holy woman preached the glad tidings without leaving a good woman's sphere. This daughter of God prophesied. Wise men from the heathen Orient, guided by God's special star and directed by hostile students of the prophets, came and worshiped and offered costly gifts. An angel directed the flight into Egypt, and so saved the child from the murderous intent of Herod. Then came the quiet years in Nazareth, where "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him." What a story! What a childhood! What a child! It was "the Holy Child Jesus." Who could have invented the story? Who would have restrained himself not to tell more?

Between the return to Nazareth and the beginning of the public ministry there lie nearly thirty silent years. Once only is the

curtain lifted. We get one short glimpse at the twelve-year-old boy in the temple. What a glimpse! How meaningful! A volume of information in the short story and the significant summary of the following eighteen years: "He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them . . . And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." He is a Son of the Law, He is a carpenter. That is all. It is enough.

It does not fall into our present purpose to delineate the three years of His public ministry. That story is full. Its study has engaged the greatest minds in the world. They are talking about it in heaven. You and I, dear reader, expect to spend an eternity with the angels looking into these things which human eye cannot all see, nor ear hear, nor heart conceive. What we want to know as far as a human being can know, what we want to be assured of is this: Who is this Son of Man? We want to be ready to give an answer—an answer that will at least satisfy ourselves—to the question of all questions, "What think ye of Christ?" No man can claim to be well-informed, to be an intelligent man, and yet be ignorant of the life, character, and mission of Jesus Christ. We want to learn, we want to

know, all that we can of the person, the nature, the character, the meaning, the mission of Christ. All sorts of deep metaphysical and speculative answers have been given. What is your answer? What is mine?

We first ask: What claims does Jesus make for Himself?

We can only name some of His most unique and striking claims. Limitations of space forbid our quoting all the proof passages. Most of them are well known.

In a quiet, unboastful, modest way Jesus claims to be far above the great men of His nation — in a class by Himself. With the Father "before the world was." "Before Abraham." "David's Lord." "Greater than Solomon." "Greater than Jonah." He is "from above." "Came down from heaven." "Came forth from the Father," "from God." He claims to be "the Light of the world"; "the Life of the world"; "the Resurrection and the Life"; "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." He claims that He can give rest to all the weary and heavy laden. He claims to forgive sin, to save. He desires that all men "honor Him as they honor the Father." He claims that no man can come to the Father

but by Him. That all power is given Him in heaven and in earth. That He will give His life "a ransom for many." That He will come again in glory and all the angels with Him.

Will the skeptic, the rationalist, the Unitarian, the Eddyite, give us a clear, unequivocal answer to these plain questions: Did any mere man ever make such claims? What would they think of such a man? How would these claims sound from the lips of a mere man?

We go further: Jesus claimed that He and the Father are one. That He is in the Father and the Father in Him. That whoever has seen Him has seen the Father.

Still further: The enemies of Jesus understood Him as claiming equality with God. In John 10. 33 we read: "The Jews answered him saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and that thou being a man makest thyself God." For blasphemy these Jews afterwards brought Jesus to trial. They put Him on the witness stand. They adjured Him, i. e., they made Him take an oath, they made Him swear. The high priest said: "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou art Christ the Son

of God." Jesus answered: "Thou hast said," i. e., it is as thou hast said. Then, on the witness stand, under oath, Jesus goes on: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." To their ears and by their law this was blasphemy, and for this they said, "He is guilty of death." Had he been a mere man, then according to their law their verdict would have been just.

Such are the claims of Jesus for Himself. Such were they understood to be by those who heard them. Under oath He answered the enemies that they had understood Him aright. He swore that He was the Christ, the Son of God, that He would sit on the right hand of power and would come again in the clouds of heaven.

Now! Were His claims true, or were they false? One or the other they must be. He was either speaking, teaching, testifying, swearing to truth or to falsehood. If to truth, then He was all that He claimed to be. Then we say with John: "The Word was God." We say with Peter: "Thou art the Son of the the living God." We fall at His feet, we worship, we adore, as we say with Thomas: "My Lord and my God."

But if His claims were not true? What then? Shall we say it? We must. Then He would have been the greatest pretender, the worst impostor that ever lived. Say it who dare!

Here we might rest our own claim for the essential Deity of Jesus Christ. But we desire to call the reader's attention to a few more convincing proofs.

Not only did Jesus Himself claim for Himself essential Deity, but the whole New Testament, its whole evangel, is based on, builded on, and pervaded by, the claim. Without the essential Deity of Christ there is neither life, nor attraction, nor power in the Gospel. There are no good tidings in it. It is degospelised.

For those who accept the Bible as the revealed and inspired Word of God the old arguments or proofs forever settle the question. With those who have so far stifled their higher reason and the deepest yearnings of their better nature as to deny Revelation, miracle, and in fact the supernatural, we have here no argument.

Note carefully these passages. Look up the parallel references. *First as to the NAMES given to Jesus.* Jer. 23. 6. "This

is his name whereby he shall be called: the Lord our Righteousness." John 20. 28. Thomas said unto Him, "My Lord and my God." Romans 9. 5. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." 1 John 5. 20. "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

Note, second, that He has the ATTRIBUTES of God:

He is Eternal. John 1. 1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 8. 58. "Before Abraham was, I am." Heb. 13. 8. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." He is everywhere present. Mt. 18. 20. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Mt. 28. 18. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." He is all-knowing. Jn. 2. 25. "He knew what was in man." In John 21. 17, Peter says to Jesus: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love Thee." Col. 2. 3. "In whom are

hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The whole Gospel record shows that He had and ever manifested the attributes of goodness, mercy, righteousness, and holiness. All these are essential attributes of God.

To Him are ascribed WORKS which God alone can do. Jn. 1. 3. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made." In Heb. 1. 3 He is said to be "upholding all things by the word of his power." We know that He has power over nature. He turned water into wine, stilled the storm, drove shoals of fish into the net, multiplied loaves and fishes. He also healed all manner of diseases, cast out demons, and raised the dead. He could and did forgive sins.

He receives divine WORSHIP. In Acts 7. 59, 60 we see Stephen praying to Him. In Acts 9. 14 Ananias says to the glorified Lord that believers "call on thy name." Phil. 2. 10. "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." Men may refuse to confess and worship Him here, and so make it impossible to worship Him in heaven. But in hell they will bow the knee to Him. Also Heb. 1. 6 describes the worship in heaven. "And let all the angels of God wor-

ship him." But enough on this supreme fundamental. To get rid of the essential Deity, or Godhead, of Jesus would mean to get rid of the New Testament, or to make its words meaningless.

We need not tarry to prove that Jesus is also true man. He is called man. He has soul and body, flesh and bone, hands and feet. He grew up as a boy. He ate and drank, and was weary and slept, and suffered and died.

What a comforting truth is this also. He had a real, a true human nature. He carried a real human heart. He experienced all that really belongs to human nature. Sin does not belong to the substance or essence of human nature. Adam had a complete human nature before he had sin. Jesus Christ, the second Adam, had a complete human nature without sin. This human nature was glorified after He had finished His state of humiliation. He took His glorified humanity with Him to heaven. At the right hand of God a human heart beats for me. He can be, He is touched with the feeling of my infirmities. I can approach Him. I can come bodily to His throne. He can and does feel for me.

In the Person of Christ the two natures

were intimately and mysteriously blended. In the one person the natures were in perfect harmony with each other. There was communion and intercommunion. There was a reciprocal communication of attributes and actions. What one nature experienced and did was participated in by the other. The attributes of one nature were shared by the other. The majesty of the divine nature was in a mysterious way communicated to the human. In all His heavenly and divine offices as our Prophet, our Priest, and our King, both natures were active. All this is clearly shown in the passages already quoted and many more that might be quoted.

This God-man, this "true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary," is the very and only kind of Saviour that could have redeemed me. Had he been God only, He could not have suffered and died for me. Had He been man alone, His suffering and dying could never have had value enough to pay for the sin and guilt of the human race. A mere man's suffering and dying could never have been a sufficient atonement to satisfy eternal justice, to take the sting out of death, and to overcome hell and the devil.

The God-man answers all and for all. He is the one Mediator between God and man. He is my Advocate at the throne of grace. In Him alone is my salvation. The doctrine of the Person of the Redeemer is fundamental.

CHAPTER VIII

The Work of the Redeemer, or Redemption.

MANY things in this chapter have been anticipated. I need to recall that I am by nature and by practice a sinner. I need to recall that sin inevitably brings suffering and death. This is sin's penalty. Left to myself, my sin would assuredly bring upon me physical, spiritual, and eternal death. Left to himself, no man can by any means give a ransom for himself. If I am to be redeemed, bought back, ransomed, saved, it must be by another. And for this my Redeemer came. He came "to save his people from their sins," "to seek and to save the lost," to "give his life as a ransom," to "save to the uttermost."

How Did He Redeem Me?

As the oldest finished creed says: "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man." More than two centuries earlier the

Holy Ghost had said through Paul, "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." In this state of voluntary self-humbling, which we call His state of humiliation, he remained until He said: "It is finished." After that began His state of exaltation in which He exists now and will exist world without end.

His state of humiliation and all that goes with it He took upon Himself willingly and of His own accord. He was not coerced or compelled or driven. All those cheap current objections against God, as if He had laid hold of His Son, bound Him, and thrown Him upon the altar of suffering, like Abraham caught and bound and burned the ram, fall to the ground when Jesus says of giving up His life: "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." So we read in Heb. 10. 7, "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God." Love drove Him to want to humble Himself, to want to live that life of sacrifice and suffering, and then to die for my salvation.

In that state of humiliation He became my Prophet. The law demanded perfect obedi-

ence in thought, word, and deed. Gal. 3. 10. "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them." Jas. 2. 10. "Whosoever therefore shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Who then can be saved? By the Law, no one. There is none righteous, no, not one. No natural son of Adam ever could, or ever did, keep the whole law in its own inner intent. Left to itself, humanity was condemned.

Then He, my Prophet, came. The law found nothing to condemn in Him. He was the maker and giver of the Law. He had a righteousness as far above the Law as heaven is above earth. But, voluntarily, He was made under the Law. As a Prophet He taught it. He opened up its deep spiritual meaning. He showed what its demands are on the soul, the mind, the heart. He put Himself under that Law. He fulfilled it in its deepest demands. He owed nothing to the Law. But after showing me its deeper, fuller meaning, He kept it in my place. He was my substitute. For me He worked out a righteousness of the Law. For me He worked out this active obedience. This perfect obedience He wanted to have set down to my account.

His own earned and acquired righteousness of the Law He wanted to have counted over to me. His legal perfection He wanted imputed to me. I could have no such righteousness of my own. But I could have His righteousness set down to my account as though it had been my own.

But Redemption is not yet complete. There is another debt to be paid. Man had sinned. God's nature abhorred sin. Sin must be punished. God's word was pledged. There must be suffering for sin. God's justice demanded an atonement.

Therefore my Prophet becomes my Priest. He brings Himself as God's lamb to the altar. He Himself becomes my substitute. In effect He says: Let me take the sinner's place. Let me be the guilty one. Let the blows fall on me. All that the sinner deserves I will suffer.

So real was this substitution that He who made Himself at the same time the Priest and the Sacrifice faced, looked upon, and contemplated, all the sin of all the race of all the ages as His own sin. He gazed upon all the dark sins, all the vice, all the crime that ever had been committed by man, as if He had done it all. How the very thought, the very sight of all this foul array must have filled

His pure soul with horror unspeakable! As my substitute He so looked upon my sin as His own.

Not only did He see it all as His own, but He felt the guilt of it all. The sin was His, the burden was His. The guilt was His. He felt as if He had committed it all; as if He must answer for it all; as if He deserved all the penalty for it all; as if He must suffer all that it all deserved. As the guilty one He must bear the awful load, He must drink the bitter cup, because He had made the sin His own. He made Himself the guilty one.

Still further: While He was working out that vicarious Atonement, He underwent all the punishment due for all the sin of all the race. In a sense His whole earthly life was vicarious. All that He suffered in all that life was vicarious. In anticipation also, as He knew the end from the beginning, He suffered Gethsemane and Calvary a thousand times over. And when it was all upon Him, He suffered the torments of the damned, and the pangs of hell took hold upon Him. The devil had tempted Him in the wilderness. He had left Him "for a season." Now, on this the darkest night of the world, Jesus says: "The prince of this world cometh and hath

nothing in me." Now He says to the devil's imps and implements: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." And so the fiends of Hell were let loose upon Him and shot their hellish darts into His soul. He was being "made a curse." He was "made sin." The Lord was laying "on Him the iniquity of us all." He was "bearing our sins in His own body." Sin deserved Hell. He suffered Hell. As infinite God He could suffer in a comparatively short time what would take an eternity for man to suffer. What His suffering lacked in extensiveness it made up in intensiveness. God was suffering.

True, God, in Himself, cannot suffer or die. But while in Christ dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, Christ was not simply, purely, solely God. He was God-man. As we have seen, God had united Himself with human nature in a mysterious, but real and intimate union. God, thus made man, could undergo, endure, suffer, and die. God ununited with human nature could not undergo all this. But our sacrifice, our vicarious Atonement is that of God united with man. The Man, Christ Jesus, suffered and died. The God who was in Christ reconcil-

ing the world unto Himself suffered and died. In a real sense with Watts we can sing:

"When God the mighty Maker died
For man the creature's sin."

With Luther we may sing:

"O Grosse Noth!
Gott selbst ist tot!"
Oh awful dread!
God's self is dead!

We can further sing:

"Jesus paid it all;
All the debt I owe."

And so all the other precious passion and pardon and peace hymns written by men who believed in, and had experienced, the preciousness of the vicariousness of the Atonement of the God-man.

The sainted Rev. Dr. Passavant of Pittsburg once told the writer how he had been called in to see a dying stranger. He found an old man with a patriarchal beard on his dying bed. After a kindly greeting Dr. Passavant asked the man what his hopes were for the next world. The old man closed his eyes, folded his hands across his breast, and slowly repeated that next to inspired gem of Evangelical truth, Luther's Explanation of the second Article of the Apostles' Creed, as he had learned it over three score years ago in the confirmation class. Here it is:

"I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, secured and delivered me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold, but with His holy and precious blood and with His innocent sufferings and death; in order that I might be His own, live under Him in His Kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness; even as He is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity.. This is most certainly true."

Dr. Passavant said that in his ministry of fifty years he had not seen a more beautiful deathbed nor heard a more blessed dying testimony.

May it be yours and mine.

It expresses a fund of fundamental truth. To be fundamental and saving for me, it must be more than a precious treasury of memory. It must be a living heart experience.

Jesus Is Also My King.

Because Jesus has redeemed me, therefore

I can be His. He can be my King. I can live under Him in His Kingdom.

Because He finished His work of Redemption, He can send His Holy Spirit to renew me and make me a fit subject for His Kingdom of grace.

In this blessed Kingdom He exercises over me His rule of love. He guides me, directs me, protects me to the end.

As my King He will come again and take me out of His Kingdom of grace into His Kingdom of glory. All this will become more clear as I study the application and appropriation of the work of Redemption and the Last Things.

PART IV

THE APPLICATION AND APPROPRIATION OF REDEMPTION

CHAPTER IX

The Holy Spirit, His Person and Work

THE God-man had finished His Work. He had purchased a full and free salvation for guilty and condemned humanity. He had paid in full the sinner's penalty. He had paid in full all the demands of God's holy law, which is the expression of God's holy will. He had satisfied in full all the demands of God's justice. The obstacles that separated man from God had now been removed. The way back to favor with God was again open. God could now be just and yet justify the sinner. A vicarious Atonement had been rendered. A perfect salvation had been purchased. The Redeemer could say of His great work, and did say, "It is finished."

But Atonement was not all that was needed

for man's salvation. No man ever could be, no man ever was, saved without the Atonement. And yet the Atonement alone never did and never could save man. A further work of God was needed. Man was still unsaved, still sinful, still guilty and condemned. He needed to take, to appropriate to himself, the purchased salvation. Man had to be made fit for salvation, fit for fellowship with God, fit for heaven. Man's sinful nature needed to be changed, to be made over, before he could be made a partaker of the salvation purchased for him. The work for man was finished. A work in man was yet to be done. Man could not do this for himself. He could not make himself over. He could not change his nature. He could not re-create himself. He could not make himself a new creature. Sooner might the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots, than that man might change his own nature. Jesus says: "Without me ye can do nothing." The carnal mind, i. e. the mind of the natural, unrenewed man, is "enmity against God." 1 Cor. 2. 14. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." By nature all are

"dead in trespasses and in sins." The dead cannot make themselves alive. A new work of God is needed, a creative work in man. To renew man is the special work of the Holy Ghost.

Who is the Holy Ghost? Is He a mere impersonal influence? Is He merely a divine power that goes out from God? Are His names and titles mere figures of speech, ideas personified? So, many rationalistic writers and teachers believe, and so these perverters of the Scriptures, these men who unhesitatingly translate God's words and thoughts into the thinking and wording of their own unrenewed reason, would have us believe and teach. But we believe that God is true, that He has not given His Word to us to confuse and deceive us. He tells us the truth. He says what He means. He wants us to understand Him.

According to this inspired Word, the Holy Ghost is in the Godhead. He is the third person in the Trinity. He is a Person in the same sense in which the Father is a Person and the Son is a Person. Jesus names Him with the Father and the Son in the baptismal commission. Mt. 28. 19. At the baptism of Jesus, He, the Son, was visibly baptized, the Father

spoke audibly from heaven, and the Holy Ghost descended in the form of a dove and rested on Jesus. When Jesus was speaking to His disciples, He, the Son, promised that the Father would send them a Comforter, the Holy Ghost. In these three instances the whole Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit, are working together, each in His own personality, each on an equality with the other two.

The historic Church has always so understood and so confessed. The ancient and modern Evangelical creeds harmoniously confess that there is one God in three Persons; that the Father is God, that the Son is God, that the Holy Ghost is God, and that the three together are the one Triune God.

The Holy Ghost is distinctly called God: Acts 5. 3, 4. "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? . . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." 1 Cor. 3. 16. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

The Holy Ghost has the attributes of God. He is everywhere present. Read Psalm 139. He is Almighty. 1 Cor. 12. 11. "All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

Read the preceding verses. Psalm 33. 6. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." Job 33. 4. "The Spirit of God hath made me." Jesus said: "I cast out demons by the Spirit of God." He is omniscient, i. e., He knows all things. 1 Cor. 2. 10. "The Spirit searcheth all things." He is called the eternal Spirit. He brooded upon the face of the waters in the beginning, before God had made a world out of chaos. This doctrine of the Person of the Holy Spirit is fundamental.

This Holy Spirit, then, is God in the same sense in which either one of the other two persons of the Holy Trinity is God. He is my Life-giver, my Sanctifier. As seen in a former paragraph, He is the very God I so often need, to whom I can confidingly pray in my spiritual distress. He hears and answers true prayer.

Let us look at the works of God the Holy Ghost.

As the third Person in the one Godhead, the Holy Spirit had from the beginning a part in every work of God. He is mentioned in the second verse of the first chapter of the Bible, as moving or brooding upon the primitive, chaotic, watery world. He had a part

in creation. He is mentioned again and again in the Old Testament as striving with man, filling men, giving them wisdom, as coming upon and resting on men, as speaking through men. He inspired the writers of the Old Testament books, for "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

But He had not yet come in all His fulness and power. Prophets predicted a special outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh. This special outpouring did not come until Christ had finished His work of redeeming man.

Christ Himself promised and explained that New Testament coming of the Spirit. That wonderful farewell address to His disciples on the eve of His suffering and death, recorded in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John, deals largely with the sending, the coming, and the work of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

Jesus Christ had promised, "I will build my Church." Mt. 16. 18. This Church was still in the future. In a sense there had been a Church in the Old Testament. In Acts 7. 38, Stephen speaks of a Church that was "in the wilderness." The people of Israel, gathered about and worshiping in God's tabernacle, were God's Old Testament Church. After-

wards they worshiped in God's temple, on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, Mount Zion, and the Temple are often personified and typified as God's dwelling place, God's Church. The Book of Psalms was the Hymn Book of the Old Testament Church. That Book is full of appreciation and praise of this Church. Read, for example, Psalms 46, 48, and 84. To be a doorkeeper, to dwell in the House of the Lord, are accounted as the most precious privileges. The Prophets promise glorious things to the future Zion, the perfected New Testament Church, which Christ made possible and promised to build.

Jesus had instructed His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father which He had given them. It is interesting to note how seriously these disciples took this waiting. "They all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." Acts 1. 14. They listened to Peter as he expounded and applied the Scriptures.

They realized that something new was about to take place. They organized for work. They had an election and filled up the breach that had been made in the Apostolate. They were ready. Pentecost was here. In a mirac-

ulous way the Spirit came. The New Testament Church was born.

That Pentecost has always been looked upon as the birthday of the Church. The Holy Spirit in all His fulness was here. He had come to stay. Jesus had said: "He shall abide with you forever." He has been in and with the Church ever since. He is the Church's ever-present living and life-giving Spirit. Should He ever leave the Church, she would die.

Where those emotional Christians, who are guided by their own impulsive feelings more than by the teaching of the Word, get the idea that the Holy Spirit came only as a transient guest and then departed and comes again in times of special revival and then goes again, we never could understand. It is a confusing and comfortless notion. The Spirit need never come again in the same miraculous way. We need not, we should not pray for, another such a Pentecost. The Holy Spirit abides in the Church forever. There is no trouble about His presence. The trouble is with those who do not believe in His constant presence and do not use His life-giving Means.

On the very day when, by His coming, the Church had been born, He began to work in

His ordinary way through His own means. He used human instrumentalities. That has ever been God's plan. God's way is to bring His saving grace to man through and by man. He used Peter, then others. Read the Book of Acts. He used Apostles and laymen and women.

God has given into the hands of His human agents certain Means. These Means are God-made and God-given. We merely name the Means of Grace here. They will come up again.

The first and great Means, the Means which makes and conditions the other Means, is the Word of God. Many otherwise good people have never grasped this precious truth. They are destitute of that abiding assurance and comfort and joy which this doctrine brings. To them the Bible is a book of information, of instruction, and a guide—only this, and nothing more.

The Bible is all this, but it is also much more. It tells me what I must do to be saved. But it also conveys to me the strength to do it. Jesus says, (John 6. 63) "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." In Romans 1. 16, Paul says of the Gospel: "It is the power of God unto salvation to

everyone that believeth." Heb. 4. 12 says: "The word of God is quick [living] and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." In 1 Peter 1. 23, the New Birth is ascribed to the Word: "Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." Also James 1. 21, "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." Could the Word more plainly claim for itself that it conveys power and life? It is life and begets life and nourishes life, because the Spirit of God, who gave and inspired it, uses it and conveys Himself to man through it. In 2 Cor. 3. 8, Paul calls the Gospel a "ministration of the spirit." In Eph. 6. 17 he calls it "the sword of the Spirit."

We might go on and show from the Word that the same saving operations are ascribed indiscriminately to the Spirit and to the Word: thus clearly showing that where one is, there the other is also, and that one acts through the other. Calling, enlightening, regenerating, and sanctifying are all ascribed to both the Spirit and the Word, because the Spirit works through, and brings saving and sanctifying Grace through the Word.

On the day when the Spirit had come in

Pentecostal power on the gathered disciples, and the Church had thus been born, Peter preached the Word. Through that preaching of the Word three thousand were awakened when they were "pricked in their hearts." They cried out: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The Holy Spirit was now working in the Church through His own chosen Means.

Peter exhorted the awakened ones to repent and be baptized. Here he brings in another Means of Grace, the Sacrament of Baptism. Sacraments are never without the Word. The Word makes them, conditions them, and goes with them in their administration. They have been called the Visible Word, and the Sacramental Word. Of this more hereafter.

The Church.

The Church was born. The Holy Spirit was working. He was making disciples by "baptizing" and "teaching." The infant Church "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine [or teaching] and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." The breaking of bread refers to the other Sacrament that had been instituted by Christ, the Holy Communion. God's Word and Christ's

two Sacraments were at once in use. Through these Means, administered as instituted and commanded by Christ and used in a prayerful spirit, the Lord added daily to the Church such as were being saved.

Christ had promised to build the Church. Through the Holy Spirit He was now building. As by His Atonement He had made it possible for the Holy Spirit to come; as He had sent the Spirit, He is the Church's one foundation. 1 Cor. 3. 11. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Eph. 2. 19–21. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Christ is also the Head of the Church. Eph. 1. 22, 23. "[God] gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. 4. 14–16. "That we . . . may grow up into

him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Christ loves the Church. His relation to the Church is likened to that existing between a loving husband and his wife. Eph. 5. 25. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church." In a true sense the Church is the Bride of Christ. In and through the Church the Holy Spirit speaks: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." The glorified Church, the Church triumphant, is frequently called the Bride of Christ. With this Bride Christ will sit down in glory, when many shall have come from the East and from the West and from the North and from the South, to celebrate the marriage supper of the Lamb.

He purchased the Church with His blood. He "loved the Church." He wooed and called and won her. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore, with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." He desires through His Spirit to "cleanse her with the

washing of water by the Lord, "so that He may present her as a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Surely:

> "Glorious things of thee are spoken,
> Zion, City of our God!"

The best uninspired definition of the Church that we know is that of the Augsburg Confession: "The Church is the assembly of saints, or believers, in which the Gospel is rightly taught, or preached, and the sacraments are rightly administered," i. e., as Christ instituted them.

This definition fits finely the Church that was brought to its birth by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. It fits the spirit and work of that Church as it is depicted all through the Acts of the Apostles.

There is nothing perfect in this world. No purely human being ever was, or ever will be, perfect in this world. Paul must have come as near to it as is possible. But he confessed that he was not perfect. He was still ever pressing forward and striving after the mark of his high calling. In the Church the Gospel net takes in fishes both bad and good. In the Church's field in the world the wheat and the tares will grow together. The tares can-

not all be gathered out until the harvest. There was a Judas among Christ's twelve. Ananias and Sapphira were in the infant Church. And even there we find strife and contention; we find the Grecian widows murmuring against the Hebrew widows. Only in so far as a member of the Church has put on Christ and is covered with the robe of His righteousness is he a saint, or holy person. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." Such ones still have and commit sins of weakness, but they hate them, mourn over them, exercise daily repentance, and ever strive to grow in grace and in the knowledge of God's Word. These are the true members of the Church. We cannot always pick them out. They are often called the Invisible Church, the true Church of Jesus Christ.

In our time and in our land the Church is sadly divided. There are many Churches, so called, and many good people are perplexed by this sad situation. With which Church shall they unite?

We cannot go into a discussion of this problem here. We like the statement of that saintly and deeply spiritual old Lutheran theologian, John Gerhard. In substance he says: The different Churches vary in their degrees

of purity. Some are less pure, and some are more pure than others. That is the purest Church which, as a whole, in her teaching and confession receives, believes, confesses, and teaches all things that the Holy Spirit teaches in God's Word. After a life-long, painstaking and prayerful study of the Word Gerhard was satisfied that, by his own test, the Lutheran Church is the most Scriptural, and therefore the purest, Church. With this we fully agree.

Let every sincere seeker after God's truth search, sift, compare, judge, prove all things, be fully persuaded in his own mind, hold fast that which is good.

But let every one beware of the popular and perilous heresy that it makes no difference what a person believes. There is no solid Scripture ground for such a statement.

Let us all learn to appreciate the goodness of God in planting the Church in this world of sin. What would we do without the Church, her sermons and her sacraments, her hymns and prayers, and the blessed fellowship in the Communion of Saints?

How sadly strange that so many men in our Christian land stand aloof from, and despise, the Church of Christ! How puzzlingly

strange that men and women who claim to be intelligent prefer some man-made organization or order to the Institution ordained by God, purchased and loved by Christ, brought into being and guided by the Holy Spirit.

We go back to the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

The Church was in operation. It was, and from that time forth has been, the Spirit's work to strengthen, to build up, to build out, to expand the Church. Those in the Church needed to be nourished, fostered, edified, and made strong and ever stronger in the Lord and in the power of His might. Other millions were to be won.

Her blessed influence was to cover the earth, even as the waters cover the sea. The Church was to preach the Gospel to every creature, she was to make disciples of all nations. Through the Church the Holy Ghost wanted to save all who would allow themselves to be saved.

Naturally and necessarily the Church had to begin by reaching, converting, and gathering grown-up men and women. It was to these that Peter preached, and from these he won three thousand, and daily more and more were added to the Church through Word and

Sacrament as Grace-bearing means. But Peter was not satisfied to gather in adults alone. The Old Testament Church, in which he had been brought up, had from the beginning made members of her children when they were eight days old. Peter carried this ordainment of God over into the New Testament Church, "The promise is unto you, and to your children," he had preached in his first sermon.

When Abraham had become a believer, he circumcised his sons. In the infant Church adults were first converted, then, in the household baptisms, they and their children were added to the Church. So is it on our mission fields to-day; adults are won and converted; then they and their children are baptized.

Where the Church is established, she, the Bride of Christ, with the same mind that was also in Christ Jesus, her Bridegroom, gathers the lambs in her arms and carries them in her bosom. Then, following His instruction, she feeds His lambs.

Families and nations perpetuate themselves and grow by adding children. So does the Church. By their natural birth children are not in covenant relationship with God. A theology that teaches that some children are

elect, have a birthright in the Church, and naturally are born as children of the covenant, is inconsistent with the Bible teaching of universal, original sin. In the chapter on sin we have shown what and where children are when they come into the world. Read that chapter again.

After their natural birth all children need a second birth, a birth from above, a regeneration.

As the Sacrament of Baptism is an agency in infant regeneration, we consider that Sacrament next. Then we return to Regeneration.

CHAPTER X

The Holy Spirit's Work in Baptism

We deal first with Infant Baptism. We need not stop to argue that God loves little children. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses." 2 Cor. 5. 19. Children are a large part of the human world which God so loved that for it "he gave his only begotten Son." The Son said: "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." These little ones are sin-sick. He has compassion upon them. He desires to heal them.

Can He? Can God love them? Could Christ redeem them? Can the Holy Spirit apply to these little ones the blessings that Christ has purchased? Can He work in them a change of nature? Can He implant in them the germs of a new life?

We are almost ashamed to write down such questions. We do not ask them for ourselves. Surely no believer in God's being, nature, and

attributes ought ever to dare to ask such questions. Jesus tells us that out of stones God could raise up spiritual children to Abraham. Do we believe it? Dare we doubt Christ? But, can God make a covenant with a child that is unconscious of it? Can He? Why, God once made a covenant with the beasts of the field! Don't you believe it? Read Gen. 9. 9, 10, "And I, behold I established my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you." Could He? Did He? Dare you doubt Him or His Word?

Men make covenants, effective agreements, with their unconscious babies. Fathers, by writing their wills, bequeath to them their properties of every kind. These wills or covenants stand in law. They are effective. The babe in the crib or on its mother's breast, when that covenant has been properly written and attested, really owns a farm, a business, a bank, or a share in a railroad. He doesn't know or understand it. But that does not make the ownership less real. And will you say that God has less power than man, that He cannot bestow a spiritual benefit on an

unconscious child? Is not this rationalism? Is it not skepticism? Is it not unbelief? Does it not destroy the very foundation of our Fundamentals?

Jesus, in whom were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, once showed us, in a sentence, the two roots of all error and unbelief. The Sadducees were the Rationalists, the skeptics, the unbelievers of His day. They were out to show Jesus that His teachings were unreasonable and even ridiculous. Jesus said to them: "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." Mt. 22. 29. Was ever more truth packed into fewer words? These words are seldom appreciated. They deserve more careful and prayerful study than they get. They are fundamental. They show us the roots of all heresy, unbelief, apostasy, and sinful separations from the New Testament Church. They show up the rationalism of the objections against infant regeneration through baptismal grace.

Oh that men might know the Scriptures! That they might but realize that God wants His children to understand Him! That they might realize the danger of tampering with what is written, the danger of putting reason

in the place of faith, of changing the wording, of flippantly making out expressions to be figurative, because reason cannot apprehend them or because the carnal mind does not like them! O that they might realize that they need to compare Scripture with Scripture, that the difficult texts are to be explained by the plainer texts on the same subjects, and that they need to study all the passages that bear on a subject, carefully compare them with one another, and so find what the mind of the Spirit is and what the doctrine of the Scripture is! O that they might see the danger and the absurdity of building a doctrine, or a sect, on a few isolated texts torn out of their connection and used as if they were the whole Bible! The devil tried to make Christ disloyal to His Father and to His own mission by saying, "It is written," and quoting—rather misquoting—a single text out of its connection, and as if that text were all that is written. Jesus knew the Scripture and knew how to interpret and use it. He said: "It is written again," i. e., "There is more written than you quote." We must not pick out and believe only that which suits our notions and our desires. We dare not be "slow to believe all." We must learn to study aright in order

rightly to know the Scripture. The divided Church will never come to harmony so long as she begins by arguing on the doctrines on which theologians and their creeds differ. The Church must begin by seeking to agree on principles of interpretation.

The writer of this was impressed for life when, as a seminary student, he heard the long since sainted Rev. Doctor Charles Porterfield Krauth say in substance: "When Evangelical Reformed and Evangelical Lutheran Christians argue against the Unitarians they use the same arguments, the same rules of interpretation, in the same manner; they use the same proof passages in the same sense. They find the same fault with the Unitarians for misinterpreting, misapplying, allegorizing, and rationalizing Scripture. But when the Reformed argue against the Lutheran doctrines on the Sacraments, then the Reformed use Unitarian methods of argument, interpretation, allegorizing, and rationalizing." When the Reformed and Lutheran Theologies once agree on principles of interpretation, they will begin to understand and approach each other. They must first know the Scriptures in the same way.

The second heresy of the Sadducees was

that they did not know the power of God. In this they were like those who question His ability to bless an unconscious babe. We want to know the Scriptures, we want to know the power of God. God wants to bless, make fit, and save little children. He can. He can do everything, except what would do violence to His nature as God.

Can He regenerate the child through Means? Can He choose and use His own Means? Or shall we pick out Means for Him? These questions also answer themselves. All through the Old Testament, God used Means. He healed by a word, a touch, a mixture of spittle and clay, the hem of His garment. He fed five thousand with a few loaves and fishes. He can do Godlike things through simple means.

He ordained the Word and the Sacraments to be the Means, the channels, the vehicle, through which His Holy Spirit should convey redeeming and renewing grace to man.

He instituted Holy Baptism. When He gave to that chosen group which was about to become the nucleus of His Church, the Great Commission, to make disciples of all nations, He gave them the Means through which they were to carry on this stupendous task: By

"baptizing" and by "teaching" they were to disciple and win the world.

He instructed them to baptize into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. The Triune God was to be in the administration of the Sacrament. The Holy Name of the Triune is used in every valid form of Baptism. The reverent repeating of the name of the Three in One is the Word that goes with the water. To Nicodemus, Jesus puts water and spirit together. Three things are present in every Scriptural Baptism: Water, Word, and Spirit.

We have already seen that in the first sermon to the newborn Church Peter said: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin." Ananias says to the penitent Saul: "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins." Paul writes: Romans 6. 3, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death?" Gal. 3. 27, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Eph. 5. 26, Christ desires "to sanctify and cleanse" the Church "with the washing of water by the word." Col. 2. 12, "Buried with him in baptism." In Tit. 3. 5 Paul calls it "the washing of regen-

eration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." 1 Pet. 3. 21 says, "Baptism doth also now save us."

These are the principal passages that speak of Baptism. Do they mean anything? To a plain believer who has confidence in the power of God and in the Word of God, what sense do they convey? Could such a reader, after carefully examining these and other passages that deal with the subject, say there is nothing in Baptism? Could he say that it is only a form, a ceremony, a sign, a something that can do no harm, but is really of no consequence? Can he find any real Scripture proof for such flippant, off-hand assertions? Or will he perhaps say that he has a right to his own opinions on the subject? Hold a moment! The right of private judgment is a precious right. The Reformation gave it back to the people; but, has it no limitations? Can it overthrow God's teachings? Can it wave them aside with a wave of the hand or a toss of the head? That is what such flippant objections really come to.

It is easy to say as has been said a thousand times: "What good can a little water do?" But hold! Is baptism nothing more than "a little water?"

We have shown above that every properly administered Baptism has in it the Spirit, the Word, and water. Luther rightly says: "Baptism is not simply water, but it is the water comprehended in God's Word and connected with God's promise." Even suppose it were "mere water," what can not God do through a little water if He wants to?

Again, what good can a little water do? No good at all, if the baptismal use of the water is a rite or ceremony instituted by man. No good at all, even if it had been instituted by the Church. God alone can institute a Sacrament and couple a blessing with it. Christ is God. We get this simple Sacrament from the hands of the Son of God. As His ordinance, it is divine. It is above man's reason or criticism. He who truly believes in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, asks only: What does He, what do His inspired Apostles, say about it? He is satisfied with what is written. He makes his reason bow under the Word. He accepts, he trusts, he adores, he follows.

Any principle of interpretation by which baptismal grace and regeneration can be eliminated from the quoted passages will over-

throw every doctrine of our holy Christian faith.

There is a solid and comforting realism in the Lutheran theology and its teaching on Grace through Means. The Lutheran doctrine of the Sacraments has in it a realism that is not found in any Reformed theology. The Lutheran theology here also is more loyal to what is written, and therefore furnishes a more solid ground for abiding rest and comfort.

The sad fact that many children lose their baptismal grace will come up when we discuss Conversion.

Here some readers will naturally ask: If Baptism is really such a spirit-bearing, grace-bringing, life-giving Sacrament, what then of a child who, through no fault of its own, dies unbaptized? Is that child lost? Lutheran theology emphatically answers, No. Luther, Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, and the other Lutheran Reformers repudiate the idea. No acknowledged Lutheran theologian ever taught this repulsive doctrine. Lutheran theology accepts Augustine's saying: "It is not the absence of the Sacrament, but the contempt of it, that condemns."

Ordinarily God the Holy Ghost bestows His renewing grace on the child through

Baptism. But while we are limited to the use of the Means that He has given, He is not so limited. He can use other means; and, since it is not His will that any should perish, we believe that He does reach and change the unbaptized child in some other way. The fact that He has ordained a Means of Grace, so suited, so fitting for these sin-sick lambs, whom Christ purchased with His blood, gives us the comforting assurance that He renews and saves every one not reached by His ordinary Means.

It was Calvinistic theology that taught the repulsive doctrine that there are infants in hell. Dr. Charles Hodge in his "Systematic Theology" denies this. Dr. C. P. Krauth, the great Lutheran theologian, wrote a little book called "Infant Salvation in the Calvinistic System." In this Dr. Krauth marshals the great Calvinistic theologians from Calvin down, quotes their writings, and shows that they all taught what Hodge denies. So convincing was the proof that Dr. Hodge, between whom and Dr. Krauth there was a warm, mutual friendship and admiration, wrote a letter to Dr. Krauth in which, like the Christian gentleman that he was, he frankly says, "Your paper proves that you are far bet-

ter read in Calvinistic theology than I am." This letter is published in full in Spaeth's Biography of Charles Porterfield Krauth, Vol. II, page 317.

We need not here discuss or prove the right to baptize infants. The opposition to it is dying out. It was and is untenable. John Bunyan, that devout Baptist, with his keen, clear, broad, and deep insight into the teachings of the old Bible, had all his children baptized. Why shouldn't he? Children need grace. Baptism confers grace. The Church, the Bride of Christ, is the Holy Spirit's workshop. In and through the Church He distributes to lost humanity the renewing and saving grace of God. The Church is made up of men, women, and children. In the Old Testament Church God instituted infant membership. God never revoked this. Man dare not. The New Testament Church is not narrower, but broader, than the old. The divine commission is to baptize all nations. There never was a nation without children. Our nation's census-takers enroll every infant as a part of the nation. The Church must not be narrower than the nation. Some one has drastically said that there are only two places in which there are no children, one is the Church

that denies baptism to infants, and the other is hell. We should not have expressed it in this way, but there is truth in the expression.

And after all the pious Baptist mother's heart is generally more Scripturally orthodox than her head. She looks into the smiling face of her babe, presses him to her bosom, and prays God to bless him. Deep down in her heart she knows that the babe needs God's blessing and that God can bless the dear little one. Why not believe that He can and does bless little ones like hers through "the washing of the water by the word"?

The devout Lutheran mother looks into her baby's eyes and from the depths of her heart thanks God that He has blessed him, implanted the seeds of the new, divine life, and made of him a son of God and an heir of heaven. Blessed comfort! Her babe is a lamb of Christ's flock and bears on his body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

CHAPTER XI

Regeneration and Justification

AMONG theologians there has been much difference of opinion as to the place that Regeneration should occupy in their so-called systems. Their systems are variant; often unnatural and confusing. Some place Conversion, Contrition, Faith, and Justification, in this order, before Regeneration. Others have this arrangement: Faith, Justification, the Gospel Call, Illumination, and then Regeneration. Others again have this order: Grace, Faith, Justification, Calling, Illumination, Regeneration, Conversion, and Sanctification. Still others systematize thus: Grace, Calling, Illumination, Mystical Union, Renovation, Sanctification. Doctor Philip Schaff in his Theological Propedeutic, or Outline of Theology, does not outline a system, but suggests that the work of the Holy Spirit in man, or Pneumatology, can be comprehended and arranged under Regeneration and Sanctification. With proper subdivision, this strikes us as natural and sensible.

The writer of this is not a dogmatician in the scientific sense. He claims to know what Scriptural dogmatics ought to teach. His chair is Practical Theology. His minds tends to run along practical lines. He believes that there is such a thing as sanctified common sense. He believes that, within proper limitations, there is natural law in the spiritual world, though he does not agree with all that Drummond says on this subject. He has long since had a quarrel with the artificial systems builded by some learned dogmaticians. He has no quarrel with the teachings, the doctrines, of true Lutheran Theology. It is the too much over-refining and systematizing that he objects to. He also finds fault with many far-fetched statements and expressions, used to bolster up the systems. He heartily agrees with the oft repeated statement that it is the task of all true theology to answer for fallen and guilty man that most important of all personal questions: What must I do to be saved? He believes that theology ought to be so clearly stated that the every-day, ordinary layman would be able to interest himself in it and be helped, comforted, and strengthened by it. Dogmatics ought to be so presented that it can be preached to the common people and that they will hear it gladly.

Too much systematizing, too much dividing and hair-splitting and split-splitting does not help the common sinner. And he is the one that needs to be helped. Our churches are full of him. May this little book help the preacher so to preach sound doctrine that his every sermon may interest, attract, and help the common sinner.

The Holy Spirit never builded a system, but He gave us all the truth we need. Luther, the people's man, the Lincoln in theology, never builded a theological system. He wrote and preached sound doctrine for the common man.

Calvin worked out and left for posterity a system, a logical system, a masterful system, a wonderful system. The Westminister Shorter Catechism epitomizes that system. That Catechism has been used as a textbook in Logic in some of the best educational institutions. Luther's Small Catechism from the day of its publication has been used as a book of devotion. It is the only catechism that can be prayed. Calvin's Institutes and the Confessions, the catechisms and theology that have been drawn out of it and builded on it, could not be preached. The Institutes

loaded a burden on the Churches that neither they nor their children were able to bear. The great, grand Presbyterian Church, whose excellencies we have always admired, and whose people we love, has groaned and suffered under the colossal burden of the theology of Calvin's Institutes. It is pitifully torn and divided to-day. Other Churches are torn and distracted because they have no theology, no system at all. We believe that we can find order and method in the work of the Holy Spirit. We believe that the Spirit, using His own chosen Means, begins somewhere in man and progresses in a way best suited to man's nature.

That Holy Spirit finds man full of sin, inclined to evil as naturally as sparks incline to fly upward. He must re-create man. He must give him another birth, a new birth, a birth from above, a birth of the Spirit. He must implant into man the beginnings of a new life. This is regeneration. It is God the Holy Ghost's first work in man.

In discussing this great fundamental subject it is important that we be clear as to what we are talking about. There are differences between the work of regenerating an infant and the work of regenerating an adult. Of

the latter we shall speak more fully when we discuss Conversion. Here we confine ourselves to the work of regeneration in infants.

We have already studied the Means which the Holy Spirit uses in reaching and changing the child. The Means is holy Baptism. In discussing Baptism we have anticipated much that pertains to regeneration. We recall that through Baptism the Holy Spirit implants the beginnings—the germs, or seeds —of the new life. It is not a full-grown, a mature, life that is implanted. It is a small beginning, suited to a small, young child. It is, therefore, called a birth. The result of a birth is not a man, but a babe. At birth that babe has all the potencies of a full, strong life. The possibilities and powers are there, but they are in the germinal stage. Sin is there, but sin is not yet developed. Why should it be impossible for grace to be there, though not yet developed? Is sin stronger than grace? The limbs and organs and senses are all there, but undeveloped. The faculties of mind and reason are there, but undeveloped. The infant is not conscious of these potential possessions; shall we therefore deny that he has them? As we saw above, a rich legacy may be given to the babe. The legacy has thus be-

come the babe's own. His not being conscious of it does not make the possession less real. Even so the babe may have and hold new life and grace, spiritual potencies and powers, though all unconscious of these possessions.

The elements of the new, the spiritual life are penitence and faith. Penitence means a knowledge of sin, a sense of sinfulness, a feeling of guilt, a hatred of sin, a longing for forgiveness and deliverance from sin. This is penitence, or contrition. It is sometimes called repentance. This word, in the Scripture, is, however, often used in a wider sense and is made to embrace faith also. For clearness, therefore, it is always better to use the word penitence, or contrition, when speaking of the first element of the new life. Penitence might then be called the negative element of the new life. It is breaking with sin, an aversion to it, a breaking away from it.

The other element of the new life, the positive element, is faith. Penitence looks within; it mourns and longs. Faith looks outward, away from self. Finding no deliverance in self, faith sees in the proffered Christ the One who has taken all the sinner's sin upon Himself and suffered all that the sinner deserved to suffer. Faith looks to Him, lays hold of

Him and finds in Him a free, a full, salvation. He who has thus experienced contrition for sin, cast himself upon and surrendered himself to Christ, has the new life. He is born again. He is a new creature. He is a son of God.

The Holy Ghost through baptism can, and does, implant into the young soul these elements of the new life in embryo or germ form. The germs of penitence and faith have been implanted through Baptism. Regeneration is there. Grace put it there. The child is born again. It goes without saying that this potential life requires nourishing and fostering for its healthy development. To this we shall return when we treat of sanctification.

For clearness' sake it may be well, even at the risk of future repetition, to point out here a few of the most striking differences between the Holy Spirit's work in regenerating an infant and His work in regenerating an adult.

The adult has his physical and mental powers fully developed. He can think, reason, and understand. He can refuse to accept and believe what is offered to his understanding. When the Holy Spirit speaks to him through the Word, shows him his guilt and need; when that Spirit offers him Christ and Salva-

tion, he can resist, harden his own heart, stifle his feelings, and so refuse to yield. The infant never resists.

On the other hand when the Holy Spirit shows the adult sinner his sin and need, by and through the enlightening Word, He at the same time conveys power to cease resisting, to repent and believe. The sinner is thus regenerated. At the same time he is converted. Of this more hereafter.

Justification.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone is most prominent in the theology of the Reformation. Luther calls it "the doctrine of a standing or a falling Church." It was the turning point of the Reformation. The Church of Rome was a falling Church, falling lower and ever lower in proportion as she drifted farther and ever farther from the Pauline interpretation of Christ and of His work for man. Luther had to have a deep-going and searching experience of the power and guilt of sin, of his own utter failure to make himself good enough to be justified in God's sight by his own strivings, doings, mortifications, penances, prayers, and ritual observances. Instead of finding peace he only

sank into ever deeper gloom and despair, until he was found on the damp floor of his cell, having fainted away from exhaustion on account of his protracted vigils, fastings, and self-torture. He had to learn further that it was not in himself that he was to look for a righteousness acceptable to God, but that Jesus Christ, by His life of obedience to the law and by His vicarious death on the cross, had wrought out a righteousness pleasing to God; that Christ did not need this righteousness for Himself, but that He had procured it for poor, sinful brother Martin and for all other poor sinners who want it. Luther had to learn to believe this; and when he did believe it, when out of his broken and contrite heart he did reach up a trembling hand and grasp Christ, then he was justified on account of Christ, then he realized that his sin was all forgiven, then there flowed into his soul a peace that passes all understanding. Luther had experienced and now understood justification by faith.

Has not a large part of the Protestant Church practically lost this Reformation doctrine? Has she not lost the blessed experience that comes from rightly accepting it? Is she not unconsciously drifting back

into the old Romish heresy of justification by works, by service, by doing? Is she not, unconsciously perhaps, drifting into the Rationalistic and Unitarian idea of justification by self-made character?

The Church needs to restudy, to reaccept, to reaffirm, to reexperience justification by faith. This is fundamental.

This doctrine regulates all other doctrines. It presupposes and demands a right understanding and acceptance of the Doctrine of Sin, the Doctrine of Christ, the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and the Doctrine of the Church. It is necessary for an appreciative understanding of the Doctrine of the Last Things.

What do we mean by Justification? It is that act of God in which He forgives the penitent and believing sinner all his sins, remits all their penalties, declares him righteous, and treats him as if he were innocent and holy. All this He does, not on account of any worthiness or merit in the sinner, but solely on account of the merit and satisfaction of Christ, apprehended and appropriated by faith.

Justification is not a change in man's nature, but a change in his standing before God. Instead of standing before God guilty and

condemned, he stands acquitted, released, regarded and treated as if he had never been guilty or condemned. Justification takes place, not in man, but outside of man and for man. It is a judicial act of God. Read the argument in the third and fourth chapters of Romans and note the parallel passages. Rome taught that Justification is an infusing of righteousness into man. Many nominal Protestants follow Rome.

The originating cause of justification is the love of God. God looked upon man in his sin, his guilt, his helplessness, his hopelessness and condemnation. God loved him, and pitied him, planned for him, and worked out that wonderful scheme of redemption whereby He could be just and yet justify the ungodly.

The ground of justification, as we have seen, is in the vicarious obedience of Christ; First, his active obedience, when He took man's place and obeyed the law in man's stead. Then in His passive or suffering obedience, when He endured all the penal suffering that guilty man had deserved.

This righteousness of Christ, purchased by Him and proffered to the sinner, must be laid hold of and appropriated by him. As

we have seen in studying Regeneration, it is faith out of a penitent heart that reaches up, lays hold of Christ, and makes His righteousness its own. It is not the faith that works or merits justification. It is Christ who justifies. Faith lays hold of Christ's merit. Faith sees in that merit the only hope. Faith grips and clings to Christ. It is the gripping characteristic that makes faith justifying. Faith has no merit in itself, but faith holds Christ. A faith thus holding Christ justifies. It is the Christ whom it holds that makes it justifying.

Such a faith is not a mere intellectual belief. It is not a cold acknowledgment of the truth of the doctrine. Such a cold belief is a dead faith. Saving faith cannot be of the head alone. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." The heart is the seat of the emotions. The heart must be penitent. Penitence is a feeling. Contrition is a feeling. It is the broken and contrite heart that God does not despise, but in which He delights to dwell, because that is the only kind of a heart that can appreciate Christ and longingly, lovingly, livingly lay hold of Him and trust in Him, and in Him alone.

Oh how cold, how formal, how external, how heady, how purely intellectual is much

of the preaching on faith and justification! And this is unhappily true of the preaching in many orthodox Lutheran pulpits. It is head, head, head! The preacher doesn't even seem to know that with the heart man believeth. Luther's living, loving, burning words on the faith that justifies made John Wesley write into his Journal, where he tells of hearing Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans read: "I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt that I also was justified." Luther had experienced justification. He knew that heart-penitence must be an element in justifying faith. Are these cold, intellectual preachers without heart-experience? Are they themselves unjustified? Does this explain the barrenness of so much present-day preaching?

Faith must be living, but it is not its livingness that justifies. It is its grippingness and what it grips and holds that saves.

Adoption grows out of such justification.

The justified one has peace with God. He is adopted into the family of the redeemed. He is a member of the household of faith. Such an one is a son or a daughter of God, an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. John 1. 12, "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of

God, even to them that believe on his name." Rom. 8. 14, 16, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." . . . "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18, "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters." Gal. 4. 6, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." 1 John 3. 1, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God."

Adoption is thus one of the precious fruits of justification.

A like precious fruit is what has been called the believer's *Mystical Union* with Christ. This is most beautifully brought home to us by Christ's wonderful words on the vine and the branches in John 15. 1–8. As the branch is united with the vine, draws its substance and life from the vine, and is part of it, so is the justified believer united with Christ and Christ with him. Rom. 8. 1, 10, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus . . . And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteous-

ness." 1 Cor. 6. 15, 17, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? . . . But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." Gal. 2. 20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Eph. 2. 22, "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Eph. 3. 17, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Eph. 5. 30, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." 2 Pet. 1. 4, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." 1 John 1. 3, "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

Truly the fruits of justification are rich and precious. More's the pity that justification is so often preached so heartlessly, in such a cold and lifeless way. In all our study of theological fundamentals, in every chapter, let us bear in mind and never forget that the true, the really Scriptural, Fundamentalist appreciates, and ever insists on, the clear head, but also always insists on, and absolutely demands, the warm heart.

We have placed justification next to regeneration; they belong together. In thought we

keep them apart. It is important that we ever bear in mind the distinction between the two. Regeneration is not justification and justification is not regeneration. But, in time, they go together. When one is regenerated, then at that moment he is also justified. Penitence and faith are the content of regeneration. How could one have these and not be justified?

CHAPTER XII

Conversion

ANOTHER important fundamental, an intensely important one. Eternal destinies hang upon it. Every one is personally interested. To be in an unconverted state is to be in a state of grave personal peril. It is of vital importance that every one who is at all interested in the Christian religion should be clear on the subject. Many good people are not clear. We are often confronted with the strange paradox that people who talk and even preach most about it are most unclear as to its meaning and as to how it is brought about.

What is Conversion? The word convert means to turn, to turn around, to face about. A traveler finds himself going in the wrong direction, he turns, returns, changes his course. He converts himself. In the religious sense Conversion means a turning from sin to righteousness, from Satan to God. The unconverted man has been walking in the way of enmity and disobedience to God, toward eter-

nal death. He comes to himself, he realizes where he is and whither he is going. He is halted. He faces about. He is turned into the way of righteousness, toward eternal life. He is converted. There has been a change of direction, but this is not all. It is a change of state—from a state of sin to a state of grace. It is still more, it is a change of nature. From being an unsaved sinner, he is changed into a saint. There is also a change of relation. From being an alien and an outcast he is brought into the relation of a child and an heir. His turning about, or conversion, has brought about the entire change. The converted one is different, he is a new man in Christ Jesus. When Jesus was sending Paul to the Gentiles to convert them, Acts 26. 15–18, He described the work of conversion: Paul was "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

Looking more closely into this transformation called Conversion we find in it the incoming of the two new elements that we have previously designated as the constituent parts of the new life:

Penitence, contrition, heart-sorrow for sin —this is the first step in, or the first part of, Conversion. The sinner has been halted. He has been made to realize his lost, ruined, and guilty state. Realizing the heinousness, the damnableness of his sin; recognizing the justness of God's wrath and condemnation, he now hates his sin and cries out for deliverance. He is in the way of Conversion. He confesses: "I am vile." "I loathe myself." "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

To this repenting sinner the Christ, the whole Christ and His full, completed redemption must now be offered. Through the foolishness of sound preaching he must be made to see Christ as his sin-bearer. He must come to see "all his sins on Jesus laid." He must come to see what the vicarious Atonement, described above, means in itself and what it means for him. This pure and full preaching of the Cross, as God's power unto salvation, must grip him and convert him. By and through the Word the Holy Spirit begets faith. The penitent sinner reaches up a trembling hand of faith. He grasps the cross. He casts himself upon the Saviour. He cries out first, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou

canst make me clean"; then, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief"; and finally, joyfully, "My Lord and my God." This is faith. The sinner is converted.

Many years ago an Indian who had murdered a man was brought in chains to the little town of Zelienople, Pa., and locked up in the jail. The Lutheran minister, Gottlieb Bassler, a true soul-curate, went daily to the felon's cell and endeavored to bring the Indian to Conversion. As a true Scriptural evangelist Bassler began with the Law. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." He tried to show that heathen how he had broken the Law of the God of high heaven who says: "Thou shalt not kill." Day by day for weeks the faithful minister kept on sowing the seed of the Word and watering it with prayers and tears. The pastor was growing discouraged. The Indian's heart seemed as adamant as his face. But the pastor kept on preaching the sharpness of the Law. One morning on entering the cell he noticed that the hard face was changed. There were traces of tears on the brown cheeks. The Indian rose up to greet the pastor, stretched out his hands and cried: "O father, me break law, me break law!" The hammer of the Law had broken the stony

heart. It had become a lowly and a contrite heart. He was God's penitent. Now, and not till now, he was ready for the story and the meaning of the cross. By its preaching faith came and the Indian was converted.

Who needs conversion?

Not everyone, but certainly all who are not in a converted state. All who do not have in their hearts true penitence for sin and true faith in Jesus Christ. All such are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. All such must be converted or be lost.

We have learned in a former chapter that where little children have Christ's Sacrament of Baptism administered to them, the seeds of the new life, the germs of penitence and of faith, are implanted. Such baptized children are the lambs of Christ's flock. If properly and spiritually nourished, watched and guarded and tended, they grow up into sheep of Christ's fold. Many of them never lose their baptismal grace. With growing consciousness they become more and more clear in their knowledge of sin and grace. Where properly instructed they learn consciously to appreciate the blessings bestowed in baptism. Penitence for sin and faith in Christ grow with the years. They are ever children in

the House. They have not become run-away prodigals.

Luther, in his small Catechism, asks: "What does such baptizing with water signify?" He answers: "It signifies that the old Adam in us is to be drowned and destroyed by daily sorrow and repentance, together with all sins and evil lusts; and that again the new man should daily come forth and rise, and live in the presence of God in righteousness and purity forever."

Whoever thus lives up to, and utilizes, the blessings of baptism; whoever thus exercises daily repentance, by daily drowning the old man, his sins and evil lusts; whoever thus daily exercises faith and daily makes the new man come forth and rise, remains in covenant relationship with God. He always hates sin and trusts in Christ. He never knows of a time when he did not love his Saviour; not always as fervently as he should, but he always wanted to love Him. He never wilfully and with set purpose broke away like a prodigal son. He needs no conscious, crisis conversion. The sainted Dr. Cuyler once said: "The children of Christian parents ought never to need conversion."

But many, all too many, largely through

the fault of parents, guardians, and teachers, do lose their baptismal grace. Some simply neglect the Means of Grace, grow indifferent, cold, worldly, and come to live as if they had never been touched by divine grace. Others wilfully break away and repudiate all that has been done for them. Still others never were either baptized or instructed in the things of God. They have grown up as heathen in a Christian land. All such need conversion. This ought to be preached every Sunday in every church.

How is this transforming change brought about? Can a man convert himself? Emphatically, No; no more than the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots. Of this transforming change it is true that it is "not by might [i. e., not by human might], nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord." "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him," says Luther.

Conversion is a divine work. The Spirit of God must bring it about. As we have seen above, He works through the Word. Through the Word He calls. Every time a

warning or inviting word from God is read, heard, remembered, or flashed into one's conscience, it is a call of God.

With the Word the Holy Spirit enlightens and instructs the sinner, and shows him what he is, what he needs, and how to get what he needs. Every sermon that clearly sets forth God's teaching on sin, grace, salvation, and the way to attain it; every Sunday-school lesson, every private conversation, every book or paper that thus instructs, is a divine illumination, an enlightening by the Spirit of God. This calling and enlightening Word, where not wilfully and persistently resisted, works conviction of sin, contrition, and faith. Through the Word the Holy Spirit converts the sinner.

In the adult who has fallen away from the grace of Baptism, Conversion is a turning back to that lost baptismal Grace. It is a quickening, a reviving of the erstwhile dormant elements of penitence and faith. It is an awakening from the sleep in sin, which sometimes becomes so deep that it is called being dead in sin, as in the case of the prodigal. But the prodigal was still a son. The baptized sinner is still baptized. Conversion

returns him to his baptism and its content. He consciously appropriates that content.

In the unbaptized adult, regeneration and conversion go together. They are simultaneous. Through the Word, penitence and faith are implanted; where these are there is regeneration. Penitence and faith are at work. Conversion is there. We speak of the regeneration of infants, never of their conversion. Conversion requires consciousness. The unbaptized adult is regenerated and converted at the same time.

What part does the human will have in Conversion?

On this point also there has been much serious perplexity, confusion, and spiritual hurt. Theologians have darkened counsel with words. They have made statements that stagger souls. They have driven earnest inquirers and seekers after peace with God unto doubt and despair by creating difficulties and contradictions where there need be none. We have met men and women who have had the joy taken out of life and who had been living under a cloud, because of unclearness and confusion on the subject of Conversion. We have met others who had become rank unbelievers. Some of them had been confused

by ignorant, superficial, and wild revivalists. They had been made to believe that they must by their own frantic efforts, by agonizing groans and prayers and wrestlings, "get religion," "get through," and so raise themselves into harmony with God. For such shallow, impulsive, and individualistic notions and doings there is neither precept nor example in Scripture. The scene that is likest to some such wild revival scenes is that of Elijah and the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel. A large group of skeptics and infidels has been the fruitage of such efforts at self-conversion.

We have also met serious souls who had been so instructed in repellent and unscriptural doctrines on election that they too were walking in the shadows, deeply perplexed and anxious. They tormented themselves with such questions as these: Were they elected? Would irresistible grace find, call, and convert them? When and how would this call come? Some of these confused ones were drifting into doubt and despair, others had already made shipwreck of their faith and were bitter unbelievers. Can that be Gospel truth, which thus drives souls away from God? Is the blame for nonsalvation in God, or is it in man? Some

Lutheran theologians come dangerously near to teaching the same kind of destructive doctrine when they emphatically and persistently insist, iterate and reiterate, that man can do nothing at all toward his own salvation. Unexplained, unqualified, such a statement is dangerous. The hearer also has some understanding, some judgment. He too does some logical thinking. He says: Well, if that's true, why should I trouble myself? What's the use? "I should worry!" How careful we should be to make ourselves understood!

Let us bear in mind what has been set forth and insisted on above.

The natural man, untouched by the Spirit of God, is ignorant, blind, helpless and hopeless in his enmity to God. The whole man is full of sin. His mind is darkened, his heart is impure, his will is perverted. He is dead in trespasses and in sin. He needs to be quickened, made alive, converted. He needs a new light in his intellect, a new love in his heart, a new bent in his will. All this must come from God. God must reach down, touch, vivify, renew him. Life-giving and saving Grace must be brought to man by God the Holy Ghost. But the Holy Ghost works through Means. His own Means convey His own

Grace. We have shown above, the scripturalness, the helpfulness, the preciousness of this doctrine, that Grace comes through the Means of Grace. We repeat, that this doctrine, rightly understood and apprehended, bridges the otherwise impassable gulf between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. This doctrine, that Grace comes through the Means of Grace, is one of the crown jewels of Lutheran theology. Reformed theology has weakened and pauperized itself by refusing to understand, appreciate, and accept it. To Lutherans it is absolutely fundamental.

The question as to Man's agency in, and responsibility for, his own conversion ought never to be studied without ever keeping in mind that Grace comes through Means.

We have seen that the Word is the Spirit's principal Means; that the Word makes and conditions the Sacraments, which are sometimes called the Sacramental Word. In infancy renewing grace comes to us in Baptism, which is water and Word. After baptism Grace comes through the Word alone. It may be a Word that recalls and re-impresses the forgotten meaning of Baptism. To adults who need conversion the Holy Spirit comes through Law and through Gospel. Through

the Law He wakes contrition. Through the Gospel He enkindles faith. The Word read, pondered, heard in conversation, in a teacher's class, in a sermon, carries the Spirit and His Grace. The Word carries renewing and converting power.

Now we come back. What can the unconverted man do, or what can he will to do, toward his own conversion?

First, he can go to the Word. He can read, ponder, and hear. He thus does something toward his own conversion. We want no argument with the fatalist who claims that man's will cannot direct his body; that his will cannot choose between going to church or going to a picnic on Sunday morning. Man can by his own natural powers will to go or not to go to church. He can will to read the Bible or to read the Sunday paper. If any one doubts it, let him try himself out.

Second. At church he can will to hear, to pay attention. As he hears and sees he is influenced. The dim religious light of the sanctuary, the impressive tones of the organ, the voices around him joining in responses, in prayer, in confession, in singing. All this has its influence. It is the influence of another world. He is in a holy place. Uncon-

sciously a feeling steals over him that he is not what he ought to be. He is in the Holy Spirit's workshop. The Bride of Christ is throwing over and around him a holy atmosphere. The windows are open toward the New Jerusalem. The minister opens his mouth. Oh that he may be, in the full sense, a messenger of God to guilty man! He speaks as the oracle of God. As an ambassador of Christ he beseeches in Christ's stead: "Be ye reconciled to God." The hearer hears. The Spirit through the preached Word wants to bring into the sinner's soul sorrow for sin and faith in Christ. The Spirit strives to bring in the new light into the intellect, the new love into the heart, the new bent into the will.

The hearer still has the melancholy power to resist, to shake off the holy influences, to harden himself, to remain unconverted. Under and through the divine influences at work on him, he can cease resisting, he can yield. Not by his own power, but with the power given by the Word he can repent, he can believe, he can become converted.

How clear it all becomes when we understand and accept the old Bible doctrine, that Grace comes through the Means of Grace. This precious doctrine gives all the glory to

God, while it throws all the responsibility on man.

Before we leave the subject of Conversion it will be helpful to note some of the varied phenomena and experiences incident to this change. 1 Cor. 12. 6. "There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." All adults who are in an unregenerate, or an unconverted, state must be converted. In all conversions the Holy Spirit uses Means. The process, however, is not the same in all. Methods vary and subjective experiences differ, even as the people to be converted differ from one another. They are constitutionally different from one another. They differ in heredity. They have been influenced by differing environments. Their bodily health varies. Their nervous systems are far from alike. The nerves and brain-cells work differently in different individuals. They are affected by the condition of the vital organs. The nerves affect the mental machinery and its working. Temperaments differ. Temperaments are affected by states and degrees of health. Temperaments modify ability, mental capacity, mental operation. Minds differ. It is a physical and a psychological impossibility for all minds to see and under-

stand all points alike. Their judgments are constituent parts of their constitutional make-up. But the mind is always superior to the body.

Necessarily then subjective experiences in the process of Conversion cannot all be alike. The Holy Spirit knows the human variations. He makes allowance for them. He fits Himself into them. With one He must use the Word as a hammer to break open the stony heart. With another He needs to use it as a fire to burn out the accumulations of dross and corruption. Into another heart He makes the Word drop as the rain and distil as the dew. A heathen jailor needs an earthquake to make him think and listen to the saving Word. A stubborn, self-righteous Paul, full of fanatical zeal to destroy the infant Church, needs to be knocked down and made blind. A black eunuch needs only to have the Word he is so earnestly studying opened and explained by an authorized minister of Jesus Christ. A gentle, thoughtful Lydia, at a woman's prayer meeting, under the searching preaching of Paul and Silas, has her heart opened like the rosebud that opens under the softening rain and the warming sun of early summer.

Here is a man of phlegmatic temperament. His mind is sluggish. It works slowly. He is rarely excited. His feelings are unresponsive. His disposition is cool and calculating. He moves cautiously and deliberately. He wants to feel the ground before he takes a step. He is hard to move. There are many of him.

When the Word comes to such an one, it does not, as a rule, revolutionize him at once. He hears, he thinks, he weighs, he takes it home, he ponders, he wants to hear more. Gradually, slowly, line upon line, precept upon precept, the divine Word comes. The seed roots, it sprouts, it grows. The new life shows first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. He has been converted gradually and almost imperceptibly.

Here is another prospect. He has a sanguine temperament. He is impulsive, easily aroused, ready to jump at conclusions. When the Word comes to him he is likely either wilfully to resist and oppose or to drink it in with avidity. As a flash the truth may open up to him his sin, his guilt, his need. He is likely to have a deep experience of contrition. When Christ's love and atonement for guilty sinners are clearly and warmly presented, he is likely to lay hold of the hope set before him

and to make a complete surrender at once. He is quickly, often suddenly converted. He will always know when and how he was converted. But his conversion is no more real than that of the former one. Indeed it may be, and often is, less real and less lasting.

The experience may also be influenced by the former life of the convert.

Here is one who has wandered far away from his Father's house. He has been walking in the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the way of sinners, sitting in the seat of the scornful. Among boon companions in sin he has been spending years in that waste, wild world where God is not. Such an one is arrested in his mad career. He hears the Word. It shows him all his heart and all his sin. He comes to himself. He thinks. He feels, feels deeply his guilt and his shame. He sees the Cross, he grasps it, and the burden of his guilt rolls away. Peace flows in like a river. He is converted. The sharp contrast between what he was and what he is makes his a clearly marked conversion. He also will always know the when and the how.

Another may not have wandered so far away. Baptized in infancy, brought up under the instruction, the restraints and the con-

straints of religion, keeping up perhaps some of the outward observances of religion, he has nevertheless not consciously and deliberately surrendered himself to Christ. Though outwardly respectable, he is not inwardly a Christian. He is in an unconverted state. When such an one comes to the Word, is awakened and comes to himself, his penitence may not be so marked and his faith may not be so glad as that of the former. But his conversion is not less true.

So conversions differ. They vary in intensity, in depth of feeling, in duration of process. With many the process is long drawn out. The Word stirs a feeling of dissatisfaction with self. It wakes a longing for a better self. It implants consciousness of sinfulness, feelings of guilt, self-condemnation, longing for pardon and peace. By and by, perhaps after weeks of thinking, wavering, feeling, and indecision, the will acts and says: I will arise and go to my Father, and I will say, Father, I am not worthy. There was a decisive moment, but he does not know when or where it was. But he is converted. There are gradual conversions and there are sudden conversions. The former cannot always point to

time and place. It is wrong, it is unscriptural to make this a test.

Zacchæus, Saul of Tarsus, the Philippian jailor, and the three thousand on the Day of Pentecost could doubtless all tell the time and place; but could all the apostles of Jesus tell?

A more important question is: Can and should every one know whether he is now in a converted state? Here there should be no uncertainty. Let the inquirer honestly and earnestly look into his own heart: How do his sins affect him? Do they grieve him? Does he hate them? Does he earnestly and constantly long for deliverance? Does he daily turn to Jesus Christ for forgiveness? If so, then the elements of the new life are there. He is in a converted state.

But if his sins do not trouble him, if he can snap his fingers and laugh at them, if they never drive him to the cross, then he is not converted.

Let him come to himself. Let him prayerfully read and ponder the fifty-first Psalm. In his closet and in the church let him repent and confess and fly to the Lord Jesus for refuge and help. He cannot live and die in an unconverted state and be saved.

CHAPTER XIII

Sanctification or Growth in Holiness

THE believer is justified. He is freed from the threatenings and curses of the Law. Justification was declared at the time when the new life started faith. The new life is a spiritual life. It is a life from God, a life toward God, a life in God. It is godliness, and godliness means God-likeness. As the living plant stretches and reaches toward the sun, so the newborn believer reaches out toward God and follows Him. The new life in its essence is holy. It follows after holiness. It thinks on, follows after, strives for, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report."

But the believer is not perfect. He is not sinless. He is in process of being sanctified. But his sanctification is not perfect. It would certainly be a rare saint or sanctified one, who would measure himself with that experi-

enced, purified saint who labored more than all other Apostles, suffered more, achieved more, was exalted more, and could say, "For me to live is Christ." But Paul never claimed sinless perfection. Read again his wailing confession in Romans 7; hear him in Phil. 3. 12–14: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

The old Adam was not dead in Paul. The flesh was warring against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. Paul was conscious of this inner warfare. The lusting and striving and fighting of the flesh against the spirit grieved him, pained him, and made him constantly cry for deliverance. And this, indeed, is a sure and safe test by which every one can know whether Christ is in him, and whether he is in Christ and in the way of Sanctification. How do his sins affect him? If he is unconscious of the sin that dwells in him, or

if he can laugh at his sins, snap his fingers and say, "I don't care," and go gaily on sinning, then he is still in the gall of bitterness, in the bond of iniquity, carnal, sold under sin. But if his sins trouble him, rob him of peace, grieve him, and make him hate them and mourn over them; if they make him long for deliverance, pardon, and peace; if thus the old Adam is daily drowned by daily sorrow and repentance, then he is a child of Grace and in the way of Sanctification.

It is helpful to bear in mind that there are two kinds of sins: The unregenerate, the impenitent, the unbelievers, or those who have fallen from Grace, constantly sin, live in sin and don't care if they do. Even when sinful things and sinful doings are pointed out and they are warned against them, they don't care, but go right on in these sins. Their sins are sins of malice. They sin wilfully. They often defy God, sin of set purpose, and say, "Let us break His bands asunder and cast away His cords from us." "We will not have this man to reign over us." Such wilful sins, such sins of malice, the believer cannot commit.

There are also sins of weakness. In unwary moments the old Adam asserts himself,

the law of the flesh asserts itself, and the believer falls. Caught off his guard when he is not watching and praying, he succumbs and sins. The flesh, the deceitful heart, overcome the drowsy spirit, and the law of sin prevails. Sudden fear of danger may overcome a disciple, as when Peter denied His Lord. Even after his bitter sorrow and true repentance he again "dissembled" and acted the hypocrite at Antioch. Paul had a bitter contention or quarrel with Barnabas. So Job and David and Hezekiah and many Old Testament saints had sinned. So great and good men and women have often fallen into sins of weakness. But they always repent, confess, and strive anew against sin and after more holiness. Their sins are sins of weakness.

They still need the Law. In so far as they sin they need its pedagogic use to give them a clear knowledge of their own sins and to drive them to daily sorrow and repentance. They need also its didactic use. The Law is the expression of God's holy will. They want to know, want to be constantly reminded what that holy, good, and gracious will of God is in order that they may follow it more closely. In their inner life they delight to do God's will. The Law of the Spirit constrains them

to want to do the will of their Father in heaven. And so, through much weakness and fear and imperfection and sin, they still trustingly press forward in the way of Sanctification. Their motive power is grateful love. They want to be good, they want to do good, not because they must, not because they are driven from without, but because they are constrained from within. "The love of Christ constraineth" them.

Free from the Law, they never allow their freedom to be a cause of confusing or offending a weaker brother. They never forget that while, in the good sense, all things are lawful unto them, yet all things are not expedient. They contend not so much for liberty, for rights, as that they may not offend one of the least of these for whom Christ died. The law of love waives rights, performs duties, and goes the second mile.

This is Sanctification. This is growth in holiness. It is not a single act, not a sudden achievement, not a momentary experience. It is a process, a progress, a constant going forward, a growing, an increasing, an abounding yet more and more. It is a Pilgrim's Progress from the City of Destruction to the Sinless Canaan. Life is a growth. The pil-

grim grows while he lives and travels and struggles and serves.

Like a plant that grows from a seed-corn, so is the new life in the soul. With the plant, life is a small, faint, feeble beginning. So it is with the Christian life. Its seed is the Word of God. In baptism it is the Word connected with the water. The Word implants and starts the life. This life, too, is germinal, feeble, small in its beginnings. Plant life, in its beginnings, grows, man knows not how. Gradually, imperceptibly, there comes the germ, the tiny blade, the stalk, the ear, the full corn. So is it also in the Kingdom of God.

By a change of figure, the beginning of new life is birth. A birth presents a feeble, helpless life, a babe. A plant needs nourishment. Its first nourishment is drawn out of the same seed that started the life. In the Kingdom of Grace the Word starts the life and the Word must nourish, strengthen, and build up the life. "Desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." Of the imperative need of feeding diligently, daily, carefully on the Word, we have previously spoken. Lack of feeding on and living on the Word accounts for the weak, sickly, worldly, cold, do-less and joyless spiritual life in so many

Christians to-day. Plant life needs to be watched, tended, cultivated, fenced about, and safeguarded in every possible way. So does the spiritual life.

A spiritual life cannot be healthy and vigorous in a worldly atmosphere. Irreverent, scoffing, unclean, profane, and godless companions blight, chill, and kill the spiritual life. The card-table, the pool-room, the dance hall, and the drink den have poisoned thousands of souls. It is a serious signal of soul-danger when any one can feel at home in such an unchristian and antichristian atmosphere. We must be in the world, but not of the world. Our garments must remain unspotted from the world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 Jn. 2. 15, cf. 1 Jn. 3. 17.

To help, to nourish, to refresh, to strengthen, to safeguard those who walk in the way of Sanctification, our loving Saviour has instituted the Means of Grace. Of the Word as a Means of Grace we have written in a previous chapter. We have seen that it is a Means because it is a bearer of the Holy Spirit, that He is in it and works through it wherever and whenever it is rightly used. We have also

seen that the Word, in and with the Sacraments, makes them effective. Without the accompanying Word the Sacraments would be invalid and useless. They have been called the Sacramental Word. We have shown that in infants Baptism starts the new life, and that in unbaptized adults the Word implants and starts the new life while Baptism seals, deepens, and confirms the life.

The Sacrament of the Altar, or Lord's Supper

This precious Means of Grace is given us to build up the spiritual life. The Holy Communion, therefore, has an important place in Sanctification, or growth in holiness. When rightly used this holy Sacrament is the most blessed privilege of the believer. This side of heaven there is no place so near to heaven as the Communion Altar. Here the blessed Christ, who gave Himself for the believer, gives Himself to the believer. Here more than anywhere else Christ comes in to the believer, sups with him, and he sups with Christ. Here the mystical union of the believer with Christ is most fully realized. Here are offered and communicated peculiar blessings, heavenly blessings—blessings that cannot be obtained, in the same measure, anywhere else.

This is the believer's sacramental feast, his soul's most precious comfort, his deepest joy. From this feast he goes forth with new heart, new hope, new faith, and new courage to meet and overcome again an unfriendly, a hostile world. In a special sense he has been with Jesus on the mount. His face shines and his heart glows as he girds himself anew and goes in the strength of this meat many days.

To realize these unspeakable blessings the believer must understand the meaning of this Sacrament and be in the right spiritual frame to receive it worthily.

It is one of the saddening facts of American church life that in so many quarters the Sacraments are so lightly esteemed, so flippantly neglected, and so carelessly and irreverently used. Multitudes of would-be Christians and church members have never seriously studied these Sacraments, that the Church originally received from the hands of the Son of God. They think and act as if Christ could have instituted and made binding on the Church empty, meaningless, and useless rites and ceremonies. With such conceptions of Christ's Sacraments, what think they of Christ?

Of the Sacrament before us they imagine that it is only an ancient ceremony which some people like and revere. They tell us that it is at best a sign, a symbol, a ceremony that reminds the observer of something that its Founder did in the dim and distant past. It has no objective value. It conveys nothing. It may serve as a memorial to stir pious thoughts and emotions. There is nothing in it except what the communicant brings to it.

Now we seriously submit: Is this a becoming attitude for one who believes that the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ and that all power is given to Him? Shall my imperfect, sin-blinded reason judge Him, question His wisdom and power, or sit in judgment on His institutions and declarations? I bear in mind who He is that gave to the Church this Sacrament. I call to mind the time when He instituted it. I recall the scene, the surroundings, the impending sacrifice. I remember that dark and doleful night, the upper room, the company, the footwashing, the paschal meal, the table-talk, the surpassing climax in the institution of this Sacrament. I read over that other-worldly, high-priestly prayer, the silent walk to Gethsemane, the struggle, the bloody sweat, the vicarious suf-

fering, the insults and ignominy of the six trials, the scourge, the thorn-crown, the cross. In the very shadow of this vicarious Atonement He instituted for me this holy Sacrament! I bow, I am silent, I worship, I adore, I accept His last Will and Testament. I take His words as He gave them. I dare not make His testamentary words figurative, but, as Queen Elizabeth put it:

"Just as my Lord did make it,
So I believe and take it."

So says every true believer. He shrinks from changing Christ's words. He dare not say "signifies" or "represents" where the Lord says "is." He knows that, a generation after the institution, the inspired Paul explains the words of institution in 1 Cor. 10. 16 thus: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" It takes two things to make a communion, and both must be present. Bread and body must be present. Wine and blood must be present; otherwise there can be no communion. In the following chapter Paul denounces the irregularities, the faults, and abuses prevalent in his Corinthian

congregation, and also instructs his members on worthy and unworthy communing. He takes the real presence of Christ's body and blood for granted all through the chapter. In verse 27 he says: "Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." Verse 29, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

On the basis of these and other passages that bear directly on this subject, our Church believes in the Real Presence of the glorified body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper. She does not believe that the bread is transubstantiated, or changed, into flesh, or that the wine is changed into blood. Neither does she believe that there is a consubstantiation, or physical mixture, of bread and flesh or of wine and blood. She believes that the communicant receives plain, natural bread and wine, but that these earthly elements convey to him the glorified body and blood of Christ. The earthly elements convey the heavenly food. Both are administered and both are received. This real presence is taught in Luther's Small Catechism, in the Augsburg Con-

fession, in the other Lutheran creeds, and by all true Lutheran theologians. This teaching is different from that of Reformed Catechisms, creeds, and theologies. We Lutherans count our doctrine of the Sacraments among our Fundamentals. Should there be any risk of being mistaken here, our Church would rather run that risk by taking her Master at His Word than by changing His Word. She would rather believe too much than too little. She would rather trust Him too far than not far enough.*

With this view of the Holy Supper it is readily seen how its consideration fits into, and indeed is a part of, the Way of Sanctification. And so we come and sing:

"Lord, at Thy table I behold
The wonders of Thy Grace;
But most of all admire that I
Should find a welcome place.

I that am all defiled by sin:
A rebel to my God;
I that have crucified the Son
And trampled on His blood!

What strange, surpassing Grace is this
That such a soul finds room;
My Saviour takes me by the hand
And kindly bids me come!"

* For a fuller discussion of this important subject, see chapters 13—16 in "The Way of Salvation in the Lutheran Church."

Fitness for Communion

Our exalted conception of the meaning of the Sacramental Feast implies and demands a special spirit of reverent appreciation in the communicant. With a firm and intelligent conviction of the spiritual realism that inheres in the Holy Communion, as set forth in all that the Scriptures say on the subject, what manner of persons should we be when we approach what is not man's, nor our, but the Lord's, table? If we were going up to this table to receive bread and wine only, then special fitness would not seem so necessary. If it were no more than a natural eating and drinking of a natural meal and thinking holy thoughts during the partaking; if it were a mere memorial meal; if bread and wine merely represented or symbolized something that is not present; then we should not be moved to insist so earnestly on a heart-searching preparing for the feast. Then we might throw the table wide open and invite everyone to come, on the spur of the moment, on a sudden impulse, without any previous special preparation, and eat and drink with us; then we might make of it a Christian social meal; yes, then we might pass the bread and cup up and

down the aisles into every pew and invite all to eat and drink with us.

The writer's spiritual sense has been shocked by seeing such things done. Without even a word of consecration he has seen and heard the minister request women to thus pass the bread and wine.

But if everything that the Word of God says on the subject has convinced us that our blessed Saviour, the God-man, Christ Jesus, is really present and really gives to us, with the bread and wine, His own spiritual, glorified body and blood, then we stand in awe and worship. Yes, then we see the fitness of heart-searching self-examination, of first sitting in judgment on ourselves, of bewaring of unworthy participation and of eating and drinking judgment upon ourselves. Every Lutheran minister who is a true spiritual guide, a real shepherd of his sheep and lambs, instructs and insists on all this in his catechetical classes, in his sermons, and in his preaching from house to house. His Church also, in conformity to her doctrine, has made special provision for the proper preparation of those who purpose to come to the Holy Communion. The Augsburg Confession says (Article 25): "It is not usual to communicate the body of our

Lord except to those who have been previously examined and absolved."

Back in the sixteenth century, the official Church Orders, or Disciplines, as we would call them, required that everyone who wishes to receive the Sacrament shall personally give notice of his wish to the pastor, who may then discover whether he needs special instruction, or comfort him with the absolution, or assurance of God's forgiveness. The normal method was to have a service in the church on the Saturday afternoon before the Communion. After this service every communicant came privately to the minister. This was called private confession. It was intended to help the communicant to examine himself and so to eat of that bread and drink of that cup. Surely there is nothing unscriptural or unevangelical in this old pastoral custom. Think of the advantage to the pastor, in his care of the individual soul, if he could thus have a private and confidential interview, a heart to heart talk with every communicant on his spiritual state, his temptations, perplexities, doubts, sins, and sorrows, before every communion. How it would help the pastor to fit in the needed instruction, warning, reproof, encouragement, and consolation. Naturally

such soul-cure requires ideal ministers of the New Testament and also that perfect confidence and love by his parishioners set forth in the Parable of the Good Shepherd and His Sheep. What a wonderful help such a relation would be toward growing in grace and in spiritual knowledge and in walking in the way of Sanctification!

Where the good, old-fashioned custom of such ideal private confession has fallen into disuse the pastor can substitute a true, soul-curing pastoral visit. The spiritual pastor, who is a true under-shepherd, will want to know all his sheep, every sheep and every lamb. He realizes that he must give heed to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made him overseer. Especially before every communion he will want a private, personal interview with his weak, careless, worldly, endangered members. Those who need him most will get the most of his attention. He will remind them of the meaning of the Lord's Supper, show them how much they need it, and how it will nourish and build up those who rightly use it and so forward them in their growth in holiness. Yes, "This Sacrament hath been instituted for the special comfort and strengthening of those who humbly

confess their sins and who hunger and thirst after righteousness."

Special preparation for special seasons of grace is God's order. Israel of old had such seasons of preparation before special manifestations from God; e. g., before the giving of the Law, the sending of quails and manna, the crossing of the Jordan, the great festivals. Jesus had a most solemn preparatory service with His disciples before He instituted the Last Supper. He moved them to self-examination. He showed them their sins of pride and jealousy, rebuked their quarrels, warned them of their defection, of Peter's fall and Judas' treachery. What a preparatory sermon! He also had special words of sweet comfort and promise, and prayed that otherworldly, high-priestly prayer. Here is an example of what a public preparatory service should be, in order that the communion may be the heavenly feast it ought to be and give the needed strength to walk in the way of sanctification.

CHAPTER XIV

Prayer and Sanctification

WE HAVE shown above that the Word is the principal Means of Grace. We have also shown that the place which it bears demands a receptive mind and heart. The Word, whether the written, spoken, pondered, or Sacramental Word, if its full precious blessing is to be experienced, must be used in a prayerful spirit. Word and prayer belong together. The prayerless reader of the Word misses the personal and experimental blessing. He who prays without relating his prayer to the Word does not pray aright. He misses the real comfort and blessing of prayer.

In the Word God speaks to me. I should always study it with a devout, earnest, and reverent mind. What do these words that I am reading mean for me? Again and again I find that they find me. They fit me as if they had been written especially to me and for me. I am moved to pause, to send up an earnest, ejaculatory prayer that God may help

me through His Word to take it to heart, to profit by it, to grow more and more into what I ought to be. And so I unite my prayer with holy contemplation. God has spoken to me. In my prayer I answer back to Him. He has promised; in my prayer I rest on, I claim, the promise.

From this we see that, in the proper sense, prayer is not a Means of Grace. In the Word God speaks to me. He proffers and conveys Grace, renewing Grace, nourishing Grace, strengthening Grace, comforting and uplifting Grace. Every spiritual Grace, every real good is from above. He is the Giver of every good and perfect gift. He promises and gives through the Word. My prayer asks for and thanks for God's gift. Grace comes down. Prayer goes up. God promises. I take Him at His Word. He gives, I receive. The child is hungry, he asks for, or prays for, a piece of bread. The mother hears, she gives the bread. The child eats and is satisfied. It was not the asking or praying that stilled the hunger. It was the bread. Prayer asks for Grace. God gives Grace through His own Means. Clear thinking distinguishes between asking for, conveying, and receiving. Clear thinking prevents me from making my word

to God equal with, or more important than, God's Word to me. My word cannot convey Grace. God's can. My word enables me to receive and use the Grace that God gives.

God wants me to pray. He holds out the richest and most precious promises to those who pray and pray aright. Without prayer there can be no true spiritual life. The true Christian feels that he must pray. Even the natural man who has not quenched his better nature prays. Of all earthly creatures man alone prays. Every man has within him an impulse to pray. In times of sudden distress or danger the infidel tries to pray. The child loves to pray before he knows what it means. The sick, the sorrowing, the lonely, the dying want to pray. Heathen pray. We come across it among the civilized and the barbarous. We have seen above that the heathen, without a Bible or a missionary, know that there is some kind of a God or supreme power above them, that there is something in or about themselves that offends their god or gods; that they must do something to propitiate these higher powers; that if they do not get right with their gods there will be retribution beyond the grave. These innate truths make man a worshiping being. The lower animals cannot

worship. They cannot be evoluted into creatures that pray. Man alone prays. The ancient heathen prayed morning, noon, and night, and at meals. Millions of them do so to-day. Great festivals and great undertakings, wars, battles, congresses were and are preceded by official sacrifices and prayers. Heathen nations, peoples, religions and their individual followers in their habits of devotion and sacrifice put to shame Christian nations and their people. They even put to shame thousands of professing Christians. If prayer is the pulse beat of the Christian life, oh how sickly, how feeble the life of most of our Christians!

True prayer is a conversation of a penitent and believing heart with God. He who knows nothing of heartfelt penitence for sin, who does not trust in Christ alone for forgiveness and acceptance with God cannot offer acceptable and prevailing prayer. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Ps. 66. 18. Also Prov. 28. 9, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Is. 1. 15–17, "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean;

put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well." Jn. 9. 31, "We know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshiper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth." Only he who is in a converted state or is in the way to conversion can truly pray.

True prayer may be read from a book, repeated from memory, or spoken in one's own words. If only the confessions, the petitions, the thanksgivings express the feeling of the heart, then the form is of no vital importance. "The Lord looketh on the heart." The words may be spoken aloud or they may be the silent expressions of the heart. If sincere and earnest, God knows and notes and hears. Groanings that cannot be uttered are often most acceptable to God. Prayer may be offered in a standing, sitting, or kneeling posture, also lying on a bed. The heart must be in it always.

Mistakes about Prayer.

Many such are afloat. They confuse many sincere souls. They unsettle the faith of many. They breed doubt, skepticism, and unbelief. How important to be clear on the Bible teaching of prayer! How necessary to know the

conditions and limitations that God lays down!

Here again we need to recall some of the simple, sane, and safe principles of interpretation: Every passage of Scripture is to be studied in connection with what goes before and what follows after. It is to be compared with other passages that bear on the same subject. The dark and difficult passages are to be explained by the passages that are clear and easily understood. A doctrine or teaching dare not be drawn from, or built on, a single, isolated text. We should always search the whole Scripture, endeavor to find all the passages that bear on the subject, carefully examine and compare them with each other, and then draw our conclusion from their combined teaching.

After studying the subject of prayer with these simple principles in mind, we find that God does not promise to answer all prayers. See Jas. 4. 3, "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts," or selfish pleasures. 1 Jn. 5. 14, "If we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." God does not answer a selfish prayer. God does not answer the prayer of one who boasts of his own power with God

and loves to publish and recount before others how God has healed, has regulated the weather, stilled a storm, or sent money in answer to his own all-prevailing prayer. Humility is a most becoming grace in him who prays. In self-defense Paul on several occasions felt himself "compelled" to self-glory, but in deep humility, he adds (2 Cor. 12. 11–13), "I am become a fool in glorying . . . Forgive me this wrong."

Again God has not promised to hear a prayer that asks Him to depart from His own plan and purpose. If He has shown us that it is His will that His salvation shall be brought to man by man, no one has a right to request Him to bring it or take it in some other way. It is ours to do our part that the right man may go and, in the right way, offer salvation to the other man. Then we pray for God's blessing on His own means and methods.

Again we must remember that God will not force His salvation on anyone. The wilful, defiant blasphemer cannot be converted except through God's means and in God's way. He may have gone so far that God has given him up. We must be careful that we do not dictate to God.

Some years ago the whole Christian Endeavor world, the flower of the Christian youth of the Reformed churches, was on its knees praying God to convert Robert Ingersoll. This praying was published to the world. Ingersoll went on defying and blaspheming God. Who can ever count the multitudes of skeptics that were made by that mistaken idea and method of prayer? God has His own wise way. We must do the Lord's work in the Lord's way and expect Him to do it in His way.

In praying we must also distinguish between that which is temporal and that which is spiritual.

When we really desire greater spiritual blessings, larger measures of Grace, a more perfect righteousness, a deeper spiritual life, a closer walk with God, more growth in holiness, then we may be sure that our desires and our aspirations are in harmony with God's will concerning us. Then God's encouragement is, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." Then we know that "this is the will of God, even your sanctification." Then we may pray without condition and with full assurance of faith that He will answer. In spiritual things God is always ready and will-

ing to give more than we can ask or think. There is here no limitations but the limitation of our heart's desire. In our desire, however, we must always count the cost, the self-denial, the cross-bearing, the sacrifice, and the suffering that such advance in sanctification may entail.

But when we desire temporal gifts, earthly gifts, the good things of this life, the things that would bring us more worldly comfort, ease, and pleasure, even though it be health or life for self or for some loved one, then we cannot always be sure that our desires are God's will concerning us. Then we must remember that He is the Allwise Father, that He can see farther, that He knows better than we, poor, weak, shortsighted, ignorant, and impulsive children. Just as loving but wise parents often inflict on their beloved children what these do not want and even what they abhor, and often withhold from them what they intensely desire and beg for, because they know better than the children what is good for them and love them too much to gratify their own, unwise desires, so our heavenly Father deals with us, His erring children. As good children we must learn to make all earthly requests conditional. We must learn to

say, "Thy will be done," and in our Father's refusal we must see His answer of love.

What serious mistakes are often made on this point! Luther doubtless made such a mistake when he practically demanded that God must make the dying Melanchthon well. God yielded to Luther's demand, and Melanchthon, it might seem, lived to hinder the Reformation, to bring in bitter controversy and division, and to plague the Evangelical Church. This is the writer's private judgment. It may be wrong. Paul had a thorn in the flesh,—we do not know what it was . We do know that it was some ailment in the body, "in the flesh." He besought the Lord three times to remove the thorn. It remained. It was better for Paul that it should remain. Yet God answered Paul's repeated, earnest prayers. God gave him something better than the removal of the thorn. He gave him Grace to bear it. Many a saint has been thus perfected through suffering.

Yes, we may pray for healing, for earthly goods and gifts. Jesus taught us to pray for daily bread. But His Holy Spirit also inspired Paul to say: "If any will not work, neither let him eat." 2 Th. 3. 10. In answer to prayer God has raised up many a one whom

the doctors didn't cure. But He does not cure all who are prayed for, else we might pray disease out of the world. We must say, "Thy will be done."

In all our praying for earthly good we must always use the means within our reach. The present is a dispensation of means. For healing we need to use the recognized medical profession. We need scientifically trained and recognized doctors and the drugs they prescribe. Elijah, Hezekiah, Paul, James, and Jesus used means. Then we should pray, pray earnestly, pray with strong crying and tears, pray continuously that God may bless the physician's skill and remedies, and always say, "Thy will be done."

Lord, teach us to pray! Teach us to pray as Thou wouldst have us pray!

How does our Lord want us to pray?

First: Our whole heart and soul must be in every prayer. We must realize and consciously feel our sinfulness, our guilt, our own helplessness, our need of help from above. "God be merciful to me, the sinful one," must ever be our cry. Every day we are in touch with a hostile world, surrounded by foes, endangered by temptations. Every day we are stained with sin, and our thoughts, words,

and deeds are more or less defiled. We leave undone what we ought to do. We do what we should not do. The world, the flesh, and the devil get in their work on us. How weak we are! How far from perfection! How much our growth in holiness is hindered! How slow our progress in the way of sanctification! How infrequent and imperfect our praying!

Second: We must learn more and more, by self-discipline, by watching self, by studying the Word, to know God's will and submit to that Will. More and more we must realize that the good is conformity to God's will. More and more we must realize that our sanctification is God's will concerning us, that He desires us to be holy. He desires that we seek His kingdom first. An old saint has said that to lay one's own broken will at the feet of the Lord is the hardest lesson for the human heart to learn. What saint has not experienced the truth of this? In Bible language the word heart includes the will. A broken heart implies a broken will. A contrite heart is a contrite will. Heart contains will. Heart is feeling and will. A true heart contains a submissive will—a will that cheerfully bows to God's will. Such a submissive heart and will can

offer the fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous man, the man who is advancing in sanctification.

Third: Such prayer will be offered in the name of Jesus Christ. But it must be the true Christ, the whole Christ, the God-man who offered for me a full, vicarious atonement, my vicar, my substitute, my ransom from sin. Through this Christ—the Way, the Truth, and the Life—I come to the Father. He has promised: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." Jn. 16. 23.

A lodge prayer offered to a "Supreme Being," and "Architect of the Universe," without even a mention of Jesus, without penitence for, and confession of, sin, without flying to the Lord Jesus for forgiveness, refuge, and help, is a mocking idolatry.

What is it to pray in the name of Jesus? The common, off-hand answer generally is that to pray in His name means to ask for and expect an answer "for His sake." As far as it goes, this answer is not wrong. If I have a realizing sense of who and what I am; if I am mindful of who and what God is, I certainly cannot expect Him to answer me for my own sake. I certainly have no merit. I

have not earned God's favor. He owes nothing to me. I cannot plead that He should hear me for my sake.

But Jesus is righteous. He has merit in the Father's sight. By faith I have laid hold of His righteous merit. My trust, my plea is He and He alone. For His sake I pray the Father to hear and answer my prayer. This is truth, but it is not the whole truth. It belongs to praying in Jesus' name, but it comes short of the fulness and preciousness included in praying in His name. Many Christians never get beyond this partial meaning and have only a partial blessing. They live on a low plane of Christian experience and privilege. They can and should mount higher.

Their faith is mingled with fear. They are afraid of God, but timidly hope that for Jesus' sake He will turn aside His anger. They use the name of Jesus as a sort of lightning-rod to turn aside the just wrath of God. Theirs is a weak faith, but a merciful Father accepts it and gives heed to their prayer.

There is a larger, a fuller meaning in praying in the name of Jesus. When we come to apprehend and appropriate this deeper, richer meaning, then we can come with full

assurance of faith, with faith that worketh by love, with love that casteth out fear. Then we come "with all confidence and cheerfulness, even as dear children come to a kind and loving parent."

When I appropriate the full meaning of praying in His name, then I consciously realize that my sin-bearer has become my advocate with the Father; that He pleads for me; that He makes my prayer His own prayer; that when the Fathers hears Him, He hears me; that my prayer is His; that to refuse me, the Father must refuse His own well-beloved Son. And so I come, sprinkled with the blood of the New Covenant, that speaketh better things than that of Abel, to Jesus, my one Mediator, who is always interceding for me. And therefore my fervent prayers avail much. What a privilege! What a heritage is mine!

Such prayers in Jesus' name are also the prayers of the Holy Spirit. Eph. 2. 18, "For through him [Christ] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Gal. 4. 6, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Rom. 8. 26, "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity; for we know not how to pray as we ought;

but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Here, then, is my further confidence and comfort: when I truly pray in the name of Jesus, my prayers, though weak and imperfect on my side, are the prayers of the Holy Spirit. With Christ He bears them to the Throne of Grace. They cannot fail.

It goes without saying that when I thus pray in Jesus' name and in the Holy Spirit, I cannot utter a selfish prayer. My prayer must then bear all the aforenamed characteristics of true, Scriptural worship. And as I grow in holiness my prayers in Jesus' name will come more and more into harmony with the same mind that was also in Christ Jesus. His will becomes more and more my will. I am being transformed more and more into His image. I follow more and more in His footsteps, and as His earthly life was so largely a life of prayer, as He ever had the upward look, as He ever sought the things that are above, so my eyes will be more and more toward heaven, His home and my home. I will cultivate, live and find joy in, the prayer-life. Though in the world, my truest, inner self will not be of the world. Diligent in, and true to, my earthly calling, even though it be lowly, menial, la-

borious, and wearisome, I will carry the Spirit of Christ into it, and while I am serving my fellow man I will be serving the Lord. Even in my working hours my soul will have the upward look and will live in the spirit of prayer. With the eyes of my soul ever toward the Lord, I will be so in the spirit of prayer that I can at any moment send up a silent petition, confession, or thanksgiving. Ready for prayer, having the spirit of prayer, sending up frequent, momentary prayers, I will be living up to the not impossible injunctions of Paul to "continue instant in prayer," to "pray without ceasing." This is the prayer-life. This should be the ideal, the aim, the effort of every Christian. This is growth in holiness, or sanctification. This prayer-life every saint should be pressing forward to and striving after, day by day. Thus can he more and more let the same mind be in him that was also in Christ Jesus. Thus will he be leading a life in which sin will be more and more overcome and in which every Christian grace and virtue will flourish. Thus will he be learning day by day to serve his fellow men and to serve the Lord with gladness.

Prayer-life is a blessed life. Great and good men have always realized the need

and the blessing of the practice of prayer. Statesmen like Gustavus Adolphus, Gladstone, Washington, Lincoln, and others were men of prayer. Soldiers like Havelock, Stonewall Jackson, Howard, and Gordon prayed during campaign and battle. Jacob, David, Daniel, Peter, and Paul knew the blessing of prayer. Luther fought out the battles of the Reformation first on his knees. Wesley and Whitefield, Knox, Francke, Muhlenberg, Moody, Passavant, and a host of missionaries of whom the world was not worthy lived the prayer-life. Why the poverty of great leaders in the Church to-day? May it not be because of the paucity of men who are instant and mighty in prayer. What's wrong with our Christian colleges and seminaries? Why the deplorable lack of spirituality, consecration, and readiness to sacrifice and to suffer for the cause of Christ? Is the spirit of prayer fostered, appreciated, and experienced in the study rooms, the closets, and class rooms, so that the students are made to feel it and are moved to imitation? Oh the blight of professionalism, dead orthodoxism, and formalism in our churches and schools! The lack of heart-power in pulpit and in personal work! Our Lutheran Church needs

a revival of sound Pietism in heart, in home, in church, and in school. In all of these we need a reviving of the prayer-life. God help us.

Again the question recurs: Are prayers answered? And again we say: Not all prayers, so called, are answered. Prayers pressed out of impenitent and unbelieving hearts are not answered. Cries of anguish in moments of peril from unrenewed hearts are not answered. Unbelievers cannot truly pray; "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" Rom. 10. 14. To this we have referred heretofore. Mistaken prayers, prayers based on unscriptural views, are not heard. Selfish prayers have no promise, some so-called prayers are an abomination to the Lord. Wrong prayers raise doubts and make skeptics. All this has been shown above.

Right prayers, true prayers, prayers in harmony with God's revealed will are always answered. When I thus pray, God hears, God heeds, God answers.

Not always in my way. He often knows a better way. Like a good father who loves his child and because of his deep love often withholds what the child craves, so my all-

wise, all-good, and loving heavenly Father often withholds an earthly good that I crave and cry for. But He hears my cry. He answers me by giving me something better. Recall Paul's thorn in the flesh, already referred to.

Not always in my time. An earthly father often withholds what a son wants and pleads to have now. But the father knows that it will be better for the son to wait, perhaps many years. He refuses not, but delays. God is patient. He often delays. In His own good time the answer comes. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness." 1 Pet. 3. 9. Monica prayed and waited for thirty years for the conversion of Augustine, but while she prayed and waited she labored with her wayward son in God's way and used God's Means, and in God's time the answer came. Some true prayers will be answered after the petitioner has gone to heaven. Every true saint who has learned to offer true prayer has experienced remarkable answers to his prayers. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." "Lord, teach us to pray."

We close this chapter on private, personal prayer with a reproduction of

Christian Rules of Prayer

Laid down by Matthesius:

"To true, Christian, and salutary prayer it is requisite:

1. That a man lift up holy hands, according to 2 Tim. 2, and offer his devotions with a good conscience. God heareth not impenitent sinners, John 9.

2. That a man pray in every time of trial and need. The greater the need, the stronger is our prayer. God encourages us to call upon Him in the day of trouble. Psalm 50.

3. That a man pray, cry, and sigh from out of the depths of his heart, without hypocrisy, anger, complaint, or doubt, even as Moses prayed on the shores of the Red Sea. Lip service, in which the heart participates not, is a vain service. Mt. 15.

4. That a man call upon the One true and only God, as Christ teaches in John 16 and in the Lord's Prayer.

5. That a man plead the name, merit, blood, death, and intercession of Christ for

help and the support of the Holy Ghost. John 14.

6. That a man pray with all boldness, as Abraham prayed, Gen. 18; with a strong faith like the centurion; without murmuring or impatience, continuing instant in prayer, as did the woman of Canaan; and with humility, as did Daniel, Chapter 9.

7. He that will thus pray needs first of all to believe that he is reconciled to God through His Son and must base his plea on his baptism and on the blood of Christ, as well as on God's command and promise. He must appropriate the promise of Christ, as did all the praying saints; and how frequently God heard and helped them!

If prayer is to be rightly offered all these things must be well observed and kept:

1. Holy hands and a good conscience.
2. A realizing sense of need.
3. A heart free from all hypocrisy.
4. Call upon the one, only, and true God.
5. Pray in the name of Jesus Christ.
6. Pray boldly.
7. Pray perseveringly.
8. Always pray in faith.

Such prayer makes our joy full; gives help, comfort, and a sure defense against all devils and evil men."

"Lord, teach us how to pray aright,
With reverence and with fear:
Though dust and ashes in Thy sight,
We may, we must draw near.

Burdened with guilt, convinced of sin,
In weakness, want and woe,
Fightings without and fears within,
Lord, whither shall we go?

God of all Grace, we come to Thee
With broken, contrite hearts;
Give, what Thine eye delights to see,
Truth in the inward parts.

Give deep humility; the sense
Of goodly sorrow give;
A strong desire, with confidence,
To hear Thy voice and live.

Faith is the only Sacrifice
That can for sin atone;
To cast our hopes, to fix our eyes,
On Christ, on Christ alone:

Give these, and then Thy will be done.
Thus strengthened with all might
We through Thy Spirit and Thy Son
Shall pray, and pray aright."

CHAPTER XV

Public Worship in God's House, and Good Works as Aids in Sanctification

DURING six days in every week the average, ordinary man is breathing the atmosphere of an unfriendly world. In shop, in store, in office, in field or factory, in section gang, in yards, in boat or train crew, he is in a more or less godless environment. His contacts, his companions, his fellows, his bosses, his customers are mainly of the earth, earthy. What he hears and sees is rarely uplifting. Sin, selfishness, sordidness, vileness, and profanity touch him at every turn. The tendency of all this is to defile him, to harden him, to drag him down. The influence, the tendency, the temptation is to live as if there were no God and no hereafter and as if he had no soul. He is in constant danger of becoming low, sordid, brutish. His soul inclines to become discontented, restless, rebellious. He feels that he needs change, diversion, stimulant, excite-

ment, anything to make him forget himself, his lot, his unsatisfied soul. The door is open for divers temptations. The world, the flesh, and the devil combine to destroy him. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life are ready to allure and ensnare him. Evil comrades tempt him. They know the power of evil lust. They know how and where to get momentary gratification. They offer the Lethean draft of oblivion to sorrow. Who can measure the temptations of the ordinary, every-day man? Does he not need our sympathy and help? Yet in it all the true Christian can remain true?

The domestic, home woman is not exposed to these temptations as much as is the man. Perhaps this accounts, in part, for the fact that woman is less inclined to be irreligious. But the working woman, especially if she works in a group, will encounter much of man's evironment and its temptations.

God knows all this. God is compassionate and full of mercy. He knows man's frame. He remembers that he is dust. He provides alleviations, comforts, and helps for those whose life would otherwise be so drab, so sad, so monotonous, and so lonely.

He rescued and preserved for man two

blessed institutions from Paradise. One is the family. Where the family, the home, is what God wants it to be, where there is a church in the house, it is a blessed refuge, a rest, a comfort, a social joy to the weary worker. It is a safeguard against temptation, a divine agency to promote sanctification.

The other remnant from Eden is the Lord's Day. What would the world be without it? Think of the grinding monotony of life, unvaried, unbroken, one continuous treadmill of toil, from sun to sun, from moon to moon, from birth till death, without God and without hope. We shudder to think of it!

But God is good. From man's creation, before and after the Fall, He provided a blessed break and change. He made it frequent. He ordained that one day out of every seven should be for every man's bodily rest and spiritual refreshment. On one day a week toil should cease, the tools be laid by, the plow stand still, the factory be silent, store and office, bank and school be closed, so that all might have a change, a blessed break, a refreshing rest. Once a week, clean clothes on a clean body for a day cleaned of the world's worry and work.

For this blessed day God has provided special joys, higher joys for man's higher nature. While man's body rests, his soul is to have fellowship and communion with God, with His saints and angels.

From the beginning men who were true to their own higher nature and true to their God had their altars for worship and sacrifice. Before God brought His people into their own land, He showed them how to build a tabernacle, which afterwards became a temple, a permanent place to worship God and to be lifted up and blest. God provided forms and times for worship. Special convocations and services were provided for their Sabbaths, which were high days for the great congregations.

Altar and tabernacle and temple foreshadowed and typified the church of Christ. From the first Easter forward the followers of Christ met together for worship on the first day of the week. At first they met in synagogues, in private houses, and often out of doors. Later, on account of persecution, they met in secret places, often in the dead of night. Always they were in the spirit on the Lord's Day. Always mindful of the divine injunction, "Not forsaking the assembling of your-

selves together, as the manner of some is." Always "speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with their heart to the Lord." Eph. 5. 19. Always "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in their hearts to the Lord." Always, when a congregation was assembled, the apostles followed the example of Christ, preached to the people and prayed with them. For two centuries after the apostles, groups of Christians met and worshiped together in secret places. Not until persecution ceased and Constantine proclaimed toleration for Christians, were churches built and worship made free to all. But throughout the apostolic days and the centuries of persecution, congregational worship was regarded as a blessed privilege, promotive of growth in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

To us the Lord's Day always comes with the open church door, the Means of Grace, and the hope of glory. In the congregation in which the whole, full Gospel is preached in its truth and purity, and in which the sacraments are administered in conformity to Christ's institution, where God is worshiped

in spirit and in truth, there Christ meets with those who trust and love Him. There the world, with its distractions, its sin and its selfishness, its worry and its work, is shut out. There we are gathered in His name. There we sit together in heavenly places. There our windows are open toward the new Jerusalem, and we are at the gate of heaven. There we unload our sins on our Sin-bearer. There we are in the Communion of Saints, offer the prayers of the saints, sing the songs of Zion, hear anew the wonderful words of life, and partake of the sacraments of Christ. We realize that it is good to be there. From the heart we say, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand."

From every such service we go home edified, lifted up, refreshed, and strengthened. After such a service we can go forth again on Monday, rested and refreshed in body, with a song in the soul, with new heart and new hope, to take up anew the daily burden, to face afresh the old foe, to meet again the old temptations, and to say, "None of these things move me." "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Going to God's House has made us better, stronger, and happier. It has

furthered our growth in holiness. We are advancing in the way of sanctification.

We close this long discussion on sanctification with a few matter-of-fact and self-evident suggestions on good works, or personal service, as related to growth in holiness.

The Christian who is such by conviction and experience, who is daily tasting and seeing that the Lord is good, will want to serve Him by serving those whom his Lord redeemed. He will serve the Lord with gladness. He will be happy in proportion as he can imitate his Master in going about and doing good. He will want to help to make the world better and happier. Wherever he can find need, sorrow, suffering, there he will minister in His Name. Neglected childhood, endangered youth, lonely shut-ins, and solitary old age will all enlist loving sympathy and kindly, Christlike ministration. He will be solicitous and active in community betterment and social uplift. Not like that doubtful character, that worldly, selfish, unmoral, heathenish woman who wanted to uplift "Main Street." Not like a sour-faced, joy-killing Puritan, repelling humans in endeavoring to make men righteous by law. Rather,

like Christ, fairer than the sons of men, His face radiating love, with blessing in His heart, blessing on His lips, and blessing in His hands. So will the Christian social service worker do good unto all men, "Especially unto them who are of the household of faith." All such blessed service is true Inner Mission Work. Its motive always is: "The love of Christ constraineth us." 2 Cor. 5. 14. Such good works, done not that by doing them I may merit salvation, but as expressions of gratitude because I have been saved; done not because I must, but because I want to, because I love to do them, am happiest when I am doing them. Such works are well pleasing to God. God notes them, God owns them, God rewards them; but His rewards are not rewards of merit, but of Grace.

By doing such good works—"not by constraint, but willingly"—the Christian gives expression to the impressions made on his soul by the Holy Spirit. As bodily exercise promotes the body's health, so these good works are spiritual exercises that promote soul-health. The Christian grows stronger by doing such works of love. They have an important place in the way of sanctification.

O Thou best Gift of Heaven!
Thou who Thyself hast given,
For Thou hast died!
This hast Thou done for me:
What have I done for Thee,
Thou Crucified?

I long to serve Thee more;
Reveal an open door,
Saviour, to me.
Then counting all but loss,
I'll glory in Thy cross
And follow Thee.

Do Thou but point the way
And give me strength to obey;
Thy will be mine.
Then can I count it joy
To suffer or to die
Since Thou art mine.

PART V

THE LAST THINGS

CHAPTER XVI

The Last Things.—Death

THE Christian's bodily life is limited by his short and uncertain earthly existence. The teachings and beliefs of his religion, however, are not for this life only. Dogmatics does not end when it has set forth, in systematic order, what the child of God ought to know, what he ought to believe, and what he ought to be during his earthly pilgrimage. Death does not end all. The grave is not life's goal. "'Dust thou art, to dust returnest,' was not spoken of the soul." The Christian religion has the larger vision. It looks beyond the grave. It throws back the curtain that hides the future life from the natural eye. There are realities on the other side.

As we have seen, the poor heathen has a dim consciousness of some kind of an existence beyond the grave. The "law written in their hearts" tells him that the life that he now lives conditions the life in the world to

come. But his intimations and premonitions are, at best, vague, dark, and gloomy.

God's Word is not so. It is positive and clear on the great facts of the future. We may not be able to understand, much less to dogmatize on, all the details of unfulfilled prophecy. Many have tried and are trying to do so. In their futile attempts they often darken counsel with words, lose themselves, and confuse their hearers and readers with vain speculations.

The writer of this is writing for the common man. He is not going to enter into doubtful details or confusing speculations. He does not claim to be a specialist on the Last Things. He desires only to set forth what he believes to be the clearly revealed and outstanding facts and truths that the ordinary, every-day Bible Christian ought to know for his own comfort and hope. At the end of this life comes

Death.

We all know what death is. For thousands of years men, women, and children have been dying. There are vastly more human bodies under the earth than on its surface. In spite of all this age-long experience of the human

race, we somehow never get used to death. The news of the passing of a neighbor, of a friend, or some noted one, always startles us. We do not like death. The very thought of giving up this life is unwelcome, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." Job 2. 4. Every one who is not a new creature in Christ Jesus, through fear of death, is all his lifetime subject to bondage. Heb. 2. 15. To him death is the king of terrors.

Even the Christian realizes that death is a discord. It does not belong to perfect human existence. As long as Adam was sinless he was deathless. If he had never sinned, he would never have died. By sin came death. It is the wages of sin. Sin is its sting. It is an enemy. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." In the new Jerusalem there will be no sin, and therefore "there shall be no more death."

The normal Christian wants to live as long as it is God's will and as long as he can serve God and his neighbor here. But he is ready to depart whenever God may call. He may pray for longer life, but he says, "Thy will be done." In a remarkably human passage, Paul, after having expressed a desire to

depart and to be with Christ, says, Phil. 1. 24–26, "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith."

This passage also clearly shows that Paul believed in the immortality of the soul. To depart was to be with Christ, which is far better, verse 23. The soul is by nature immortal. The original soul was inbreathed by God. "The breath of the Almighty hath given me life." As imparted by God, in a mysterious sense a part of God, the soul cannot die. The soul cannot fully develop all its capacities and powers in this short, sin-cramped life. It needs an eternity in that home of the soul. Here it is often stung or hurt and misrepresented and made to suffer. It needs a life where its wrongs will be righted and its highest peace enjoyed. Doubtless for some such reasons the thoughtful heathen have an intuitive belief that the soul cannot die.

The whole Bible teaches the immortality of the soul. The teaching is not so clear in the Old Testament; but there are intimations, longings, and expressions that become more and more clear. Jesus quotes the passage, "I

am the God of Jacob," as proving that these patriarchs were still living, Mt. 22. 32. In Lk. 20. 35, 36 Jesus says of those who "shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world [to come] and the resurrection from the dead," that they can not "die any more, for they are equal unto the angels." In Jn. 3. 16 He says believers "have everlasting life"; in Jn. 6. 58, "He that eateth of this bread shall live forever"; and in Jn. 11. 25, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Heb. 12. 23, refers to "the spirits of just men made perfect." So the poor Lazarus died and was "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." The soul of Dives was "in torments," but could see, hear, taste, and remember. To the dying thief Jesus said: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." In addition to what we quoted from Paul in Philippians, we note his expression in 2 Cor. 5. 8, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." We might quote many more passages, but these will suffice. Russellites, who call themselves "Bible students," but really are Bible perverters, denying the very Lord who bought them, and other heretics may lecture and tell you that the soul is not immortal, or

that the soul is unconscious in sleep after death. They are among the false prophets that Christ predicted and against whom Paul warned. Belief in immortality is clearly Scriptural and therefore fundamental.

There has been much unprofitable and confusing speculation as to the place and condition of souls between death and the resurrection.

We shall not here enter into a discussion of the Intermediate State. From the passages quoted above we know that the departed souls of the righteous are with Christ, in His "many mansions," "in Paradise," and are blessed. More will be said when we come to discuss Eternal Life, or Heaven.

For the present also it is enough to know that the souls of the wicked are separated, shut out from God and the good, are in torment, in anguish of mind and soul. More of this under the topic Eternal Death, or Hell.

Just an assuring word here to help quiet the perplexed minds that trouble themselves unnecessarily with that old question that will not down: What will become of the heathen who never had an opportunity to hear the Gospel?

Before we attempt an answer, let us affirm and reaffirm our unshaken conviction:

1. That no soul ever was, or ever can be, saved without reference to, and relation with, the Vicarious Atonement of Jesus Christ.

2. That no one ever did, or ever can, go to heaven who has not been born again by the Holy Spirit. These fundamental convictions must abide.

3. It is our present conviction that there is no sure, clear Scriptural ground for a belief in probation after death. On this basis the heathen also, if saved, must be saved before they die.

4. Now, if those heathen who "do by nature the things contained in the law" are thus "a law unto themselves," "which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them"; if they are thus "feeling after God if haply they might find him" (see Rom. 2. 14–16 and Acts 17. 27); if by the bloody sacrifices they offer, they are seeking an atonement for sin; may not God, on the

basis of this, reveal to them some saving glimpse of the atonement of Christ? And when they realize that in themselves they are not well-pleasing to God, may not the Holy Spirit, on the basis of such a feeling of need and guilt, such a longing for an acceptable righteousness, reveal to them enough of the way of life from above and thus "save them as by fire"?

We do know that it is not God's will that anyone should perish, but that all should come to life; and to that good and gracious will of God we leave the salvation of the heathen. The Judge of all the earth will do right. Our greater concern is, whether we are doing what God expects of us in sending the precious Gospel to those who are still living in the dark places of the earth, that are full of the habitations of cruelty.

While the Christian who dies in the Lord is saved and enters at once into a state and condition of bliss with Christ in heaven, and while his happiness is the perfect happiness of a disembodied spirit, he is still waiting for the resurrection of his body and the final Judgment. These great events will be brought in by Christ at His Second Advent.

Before we consider that Second Advent, or Coming, of Christ we need to study and examine what the Word teaches as to the times preceding that final coming.

CHAPTER XVII

The Last Times

THERE are those who believe that the world will grow better and ever better; that civilization, education, culture, discovery, invention, science, and art will all advance and will have such a humanizing and ameliorating influence that humanity will ever grow broader, better, and happier. Physical evils, like poverty, disease, and suffering will be gradually eliminated. Violence and crime will become more and more rare. Good laws will make good rulers and good subjects. Nations and their peoples will learn that unselfishness is the best policy and that national altruism, community altruism, and individual altruism will pay the highest dividends. Then nations will no more make war on each other, and individuals will no longer exploit and wrong one another. This will be the millennium of human achievement. Recognition of the fatherhood of God and of the brotherhood of man will make all men and all conditions new. The Kingdom of God will be

here. Earth will be heaven. Man will neither believe in, nor want, any other heaven.

These are the ideas of modern, idealistic evolutionists and sociologists. They leave God and Revelation out of the question and spin their theories out of their own brains. They unsettle many weak Christians. They cannot be classed among the good and sincere students of God's Word. They need no word but their own. How they harmonize the course of humanity thus far, especially its brutish conduct, by no means confined to one side, in the late, great, disgraceful war, with their ethereal theories, they have not yet told us. Either the vaunted kingdom of man has not yet come, or history brands it as an increasing abomination of desolation!

Other students and teachers, who do not want to leave God out of their calculations, try to make themselves believe that the work and influence of the Church in teaching and preaching the Gospel, in pushing her great missionary work at home and abroad, will gradually make the world so good that when Christ comes the world will be as fit and ready to welcome Him as a bride adorned welcomes her husband. This would certainly be a consummation devoutly to be wished—if only it

were true. The course of the world thus far certainly does not favor such pleasant optimism. Less than one-third of humanity has been even evangelized, much less converted. In our own favored land, which we like to call a Christian land, two adults are outside of the Church to every one who is at least professedly inside. And who will count the tares among the wheat?

What saith the Scripture? "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word there is no light in them," Is. 8. 20. At the first Christian Council or Synod ever held, when the apostles and elders met together in Jerusalem, James the brother of our Lord, the head of the Church of Jerusalem, who, it seems, presided over that Council, after others had spoken, said: "Brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." Acts 15. 13, 14. For what purpose did God visit the Gentiles? Was it to win all for Christ, to convert them all? James does not say so. "To take out of them a people for his name." What James said, including these words, pleased the apostles and elders. No one questioned or corrected his

words. That Council, so shortly after Christ's ascension and Pentecost, a more nearly inspired Council than any that has been held since, accepted the saying that God visited the Gentiles in order to take out a people for Himself. True, salvation was to be offered to all, but many would reject "the counsel of God against themselves." Others would accept. These latter were to be the people taken out for Christ. So it was then; so has it been ever since; so will it be till Christ comes again. Where is the promise that the world will gradually be converted to Christ? What is the consensus of the predictions that clearly refer to the last times?

To say nothing of the wars and rumors of wars, of the famines, the pestilence, the persecutions of the righteous, the arising of false prophets, the increasing skepticism, the falling away and the waxing cold of the love of many, the unwillingness to endure sound doctrine, the clamor of itching ears that want teachers after their own lusts, who will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside unto fables—do these Scripture expressions point to a millennium of righteousness preceding Christ's coming? And what shall we say of the present-day credulity, the strange

infatuations for such damnable heresies as Dowieism, Spiritualism, Russellism, Eddyism, Adventism, Mormonism, and what not? Their false prophets are preparing the world for the terrible times that shall come. We are shocked with the frightful increase of vice and crime. Every lewd person, every selfish grafter, profiteer, cheat, and oppressor of the poor, can banish fear and draw comfort from Russellism and other modern isms. The world is ripening for Judgment. To us, who believe, all this means the approaching of the end. To us Christ says: "But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh." Lk. 21. 28.

We must not close this section without at least a brief reference to Antichrist, or rather to Antichristianity. It is a difficult subject. The writer of this acknowledges that he is not ready to dogmatize on it. Christ prophesied that false Christs and false prophets would arise. In Mt. 24. 23, 24 He says: "Then if any shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very

elect." Of the coming of the "lawless one" Paul says, 2 Th. 2. 9, "Whose coming is according to the workings of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." In verses 3, 7 and 8 of the same chapter he says: "Let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition ... For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manfestation of his coming." Read all the twelve verses of chapter two. John says in his first Epistle, chapter 2, verses 18 and 22: "And as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour . . . This is the antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son." Also chapter 4. 3, "Every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already." We leave out the many and more difficult passages often quoted from Daniel and from Revelation. From what we

have quoted it seems to be clear that from the days of the apostles there have been many Antichrists. It also seems probable that as the end approaches they will become even more bold in their soul-destroying heresies and blasphemies. They will not confess the God-man, Christ Jesus, incarnate and sacrificed for the sin of the world.

In this light examine again Russellism, which makes a mere creature out of Christ and denies His literal rising from the dead; Christian Science, which denies the reality of the incarnation, and will not confess that God was manifested in Christ and died for sin-laden humanity; Mormonism with its gross, repulsive, and blasphemous caricature of the person of Christ; Spiritualism and all other isms that deny the sinfulness and damnableness of sin and the need of a vicarious atonement by one who is God and man in one person. All such are antichristian. All such are soul-destroying, damnable heresies, delusions of the devil. Many sincere searchers of the Scriptures believe that all such dangerous and devilish systems will finally merge or unite under one personal leader and head, and that this head will be the Beast, the final and su-

preme False Prophet, the personal Antichrist. On this also we cannot dogmatize.

Surely, in these perilous days of the Last Times an indifferent, careless, convictionless, and creedless Church will never be able to stand against the destructive forces of the wiles of the devil. Neither will a Church that may be sound, orthodox, and Biblical in belief and teaching, but that is cold, worldly, careless, and prayerless in heart and life be able to survive the times when the very elect will be in danger of becoming castaways. Only the Churches whose ministers and members are on fire with the love of Christ and of souls, who are ready to dare, to do, to serve, to sacrifice, to suffer, and to die for Him who loved them and gave Himself for them, can be fit, able, efficient, and sufficient to take out a people for the Lord, a people who will be saved as by fire.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Second Coming of Christ

THE last dark days will end. For the elects' sake they will be shortened. The perilous times, with their sorrows and calamities, their apostasies and persecutions and great tribulations, will come to a close. When calamity and cruelty, gayety and carousing, bitterness and persecution against Christ and His faithful ones are at their height, when Antichrist will be sounding out his great, swelling words of defiance against the Lord and His Anointed, then, suddenly, Christ will come again. As surely as every promise of His first coming was literally fulfilled, so surely will every prophecy of His Second Coming be literally fulfilled. As surely and as really as He came the first time for salvation, so surely will He come the second time for judgment. If there is to be no real, literal, and visible coming again of our Lord and Saviour, then our Bible is a book of confusion, a tangle of uncertainties, a labyrinth, a blind

alley, leading nowhere. Then there is no world-plan, no world-consummation. But we are persuaded that there is "one sure divine event to which the whole creation moves."

One-thirtieth part of our New Testament relates to the final consummation.

The last great Mount Olive address, delivered by Christ to His disciples, after Palm Sunday and before His suffering, is full of expressions that the destruction of Jerusalem can never and did never fulfill. No one during that tragic event saw the Son of Man "coming in a cloud with power and great glory." That graphic picture of the judgment scene in Mt. 25. 31–46 certainly has no reference to Jerusalem's destruction. When Jesus was on the witness stand, on trial for His life, when the high priest "adjured" Him, i. e., made Him take the oath and swear that He would tell the truth, He said: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

At His ascension, when He had disappeared in a cloud, "while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing

up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," Acts 1. 10, 11; see also 1 Th. 3. 13, "At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints"; and 1 Th. 4. 16, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God." We might quote many more passages to prove the certainty, the visibility, and the majesty of His coming, but for every sincere believer in the Word these will suffice.

The two events that will take place when He thus comes again are, first, the resurrection of those who had died in Christ; and second, the transformation and translating of the living saints. Of the former event we shall speak more fully when we come to treat of the Resurrection.

Millions will be living when He comes: "Behold, I tell you a mystery. We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52. Also 1 Th. 4. 15, "For this we say unto you by the

word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep." In 2 Cor. 5. 1, 2, and 3, this change that takes place in those who are thus translated is called being "clothed upon." Our body is called "our earthly house of this tabernacle." The risen, or translated, body is called "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The Corinthian Christians were said to groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with their house, which is from heaven, i. e., with their new, transformed, or changed, bodies.

At that coming of the Lord, when living saints shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, shall be fulfilled what the Lord said in Lk. 17. 34–36, "There shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left." See also 1 Th. 4. 17, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." And so millions of saints then living will never die, but all will be changed, all will be clothed

upon with new, immortal bodies like unto Christ's own glorious body.

We cannot close this brief discussion of the Second Coming of Christ without some reference to the much disputed and variously interpreted subject of the Millennium. The very fact that so much has been written on it and that it has been so widely discussed certainly seems to show that it occupies a real and an important place in the teaching and study of the Last Things.

Theologians and writers who have treated on the Millennium may be divided into two general classes. Adherents of one class are called postmillenarians. They believe and teach that, through the wide-spread use of the present day means and agencies, the world will become ever better and better so that before Christ comes again there will be a millennial period in which godliness shall so prosper that righteousness shall cover the earth even as the waters cover the sea. Then, after this blessed period, Christ shall come and find a world prepared to welcome Him. These are the postmillenarians. "Post" means after. Christ will come after this dreamed of and imagined millennium is in progress.

Adherents of the second class are called premillenarians. They believe and teach that there will be no millennium of righteousness before Christ comes, but that by His coming and its attending acts He will usher in a new dispensation which we call a millennium, or a triumphant reign of Christ.

Believers in a millennium have also been called chiliasts. Some of these have been called gross chiliasts, because they conceive a millennium so gross in its character that it would seem to be a carnal, earthly kingdom suited to men in the flesh. Such gross chiliasts were the Anabaptists in the days of the Reformation. Melanchthon informs us that it was against these that the seventeenth Article of the Augsburg Confession was directed. That Article reads: "They also condemn others who spread Jewish opinions, that, before the resurrection of the dead, the godly shall occupy the kingdom of the world, the wicked being everywhere suppressed." Let it be carefully noted, this Article does not condemn all chiliasm. It does condemn a certain gross kind. It condemns those who spread Jewish opinions; who teach that the godly shall occupy the kingdom of the world before the resurrection of the dead, i. e., before

Christ comes again. It is directed not against premillenarians, but against postmillenarians.

Will there be a millennium after Christ comes? What is the consensus of the teaching of the Word? The writer of this does not claim to be a specialist in the interpretation of prophecy. He believes that now we can see only as "through a glass, darkly; but then face to face"; that "now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." The writer will not dogmatize. Some time we'll understand. Will the interested reader kindly look up and read these passages. They would require too much space to copy here. Is. 33. 20–24, and 62. 1–7, and 65. 19–25; Dan. 7. 13, 14, 27; Zech. 8. 20–23 and 14. 20, 21; also Mt. 26. 29; Lk. 22. 29, 30; Acts 3. 20, 21; and especially Revelation, chapter 20, which is the most direct and grapic of all. These prophecies certainly have not yet been fulfilled. They will be. According to Lutheran rules of interpretation, what do they mean? Let him that readeth understand.

We close with these reflections:

1. The view of Luther and of the older Lutheran dogmaticians that the millenni-

um is past is untenable. There has been no millenial period.

2. The view that there will be a millennium before Christ comes again is untenable. As we have seen in our study of the times preceding His coming, the plain teaching of Scripture is against it. So is the Augsburg Confession.
3. Those who believe in the canonicity and inspiration of the Book of Revelation dare not wipe out or belittle Chapter XX.
4. Those who are prejudiced against Premillenarianism need to guard against doing violence to the Lutheran principles of Hermeneutics, or interpretation.
5. Many recognized, sound Lutheran theologians have believed and taught that there will be a millennium brought in by Christ at His coming.

Remembering that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day, these theologians do not insist that the millennium will endure for exactly a thousand natural years. A thousand years may mean an indefinite period. Neither do they deem it necessary to explain every detail of the character of that period.

Among theologians who are premillenarians, we name: Bengel, Auberlen, Frank, Von Hofmann, Luthardt, Bring, Fjellstedt, Weidner, Lindberg, the late sainted Dr. J. N. Kildahl, and Dr. M. Reu. We like the view of Grattan Guinness, who is not a Lutheran yet a devout student of prophecy. Dr. Lindberg quotes him as saying: "He who had previously come for His people, now comes with them; not that there are two future comings of Christ, but only one. That coming, however, has not only two aspects but two stages . . . While therefore we see no authority for making chronological distinctions between separate stages of the one Advent, we see, on the other hand, abundant reason in Scripture to believe that the millennial reign of Christ will not be fully established in a day or a year. It must be remembered that He comes not peacefully to ascend a vacant and waiting throne, welcomed by a willing people, but to dispossess a mighty usurper and to overthrow a great rebellion, to right the accumulated wrongs of ages."

CHAPTER XIX

The Resurrection

THE wages of sin is death." Sin had been abroad from Adam to Moses, and Moses' law had opposed and held up to man the exceeding sinfulness of sin. From Moses to Christ, sin had been cursing and biting and blighting and stinging humanity. Christ had come, had taken the curse and the sting into His own body, and His vicarious atonement had made possible deliverance from the guilt and the power of sin. Nevertheless man, even justified man, still had the "law of sin" in his members and still "sinned oft." And so the wages of sin still followed and plagued him. The dread of physical death, the dread of the rupture between the body and the soul, the shrinking from being unclothed, still kept him more or less in bondage. And so even after the first Advent, death reigned. And death will reign till He who is the Life comes to destroy this last enemy.

Even now death is still abroad. From our

home town to the uttermost parts of the earth, death reigns. The earth is a great mausoleum. Everywhere and everywhen its sod is ripped open to receive the dead into its bosom. Everywhere the white stones of the cities of the dead stare us in the face. The heaving mounds mourn. Millions of humans are under the seas. Death reigns.

But, behold! We see One mightier than death. He comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, traveling in the greatness of His strength, mighty to save. Is. 63. 1. He comes to conquer man's last enemy.

For man, for every man, He himself had tasted death. So bitter and convulsing had been the cup that inanimate nature, the nature that had been blighted, marred and distressed and disturbed and cursed on account of man's sin, had mourned and trembled. The sun had been darkened and the earth had quaked. The Conqueror of death had been shrouded, embalmed, and laid away in a dark grave. But death and the grave had not held Him. He had risen. Earth again had felt it, had rocked, and had shaken open many graves of dead saints. He had risen. He had become the firstfruits. After Him come the saints from the opened graves. They were the ear-

nest, the visible prophecy, the types of the future rising from the dead of all saints.

This brings us to a consideration of

The Resurrection

As sure as Christ rose again from the dead, so sure will there be a resurrection of all the dead. For those that are Christ's this will be the great Easter morning. Then Christianity will be justified as the one, true, and final religion. All its promises and hopes will be realized.

All the dead will be raised, the wicked as well as the righteous. If all are to be judged, as is so clearly shown in Mt. 25. 31 ff., then all the dead must have been previously raised up. In his masterly defense before the Jewish Council and the Roman governor, Paul makes this clear statement: "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." Acts 24. 15. Jesus speaks very clearly in John 5. 28, 29, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." See also Rev. 20. 13, "And the sea gave up the dead

that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works." The heretics who teach that the wicked dead are annihilated and will never rise, and that the final resurrection is for the righteous only, cannot wipe out these plain declarations of Holy Writ. If they desire to make them out untrue, the fearful responsibility is theirs.

The dead will not all be raised up promiscuously or simultaneously. There is to be an order in the great act. There is a distinction between the rising of the righteous and that of the wicked. Of the former Jesus says, Luke 20. 35: "But they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world and the resurrection from the dead." Literally translated, the last words would read, "the resurrection from among the dead." In Phil. 3. 11 Paul says: "If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead." The Greek is the same as in the former passage. The margin has it "the out-resurrection, out from among the dead ones." This resurrection, out from among the dead, is special and separate: "each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's at his coming," 1 Cor. 15. 23. "The dead in Christ shall rise

first," 1 Th. 4. 16. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." These passages are clear. The Lutheran rules of interpretation will have to be thrown overboard before they can be spiritualized or explained away.

As to the interval between the first and the general resurrection we cannot dogmatize. What we said above as to the Lord's one day and a thousand years applies here.

The general resurrection will call forth those who were not included in the first one, which was a selection from among the dead. It will embrace all those who will find themselves on the left hand of the Judge.

"But some man will say: How are the dead raised up and with what body do they come?" Will it be the identical body, just as it was laid in the grave? "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." "It is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." Read again and read often that wonderful Resurrection Epic of Paul, 1 Cor. 15.

The analogy between a seed-corn and the human body on the one hand, and between the plant that grows out of the seed and the resurrection body on the other hand, is pregnant with meaning. It tells us all we need to know. The embryo of the new body is in the old body. The new body will be of the essence of the old body, will come out of the old body. All imperfection, all corruptibility that inhered in the old body will be left behind. Our house, not made with hands, i. e., our new body, will be eternal. It will be fashioned "like unto Christ's own glorious body." The wonderful after Easter forty days show us that other-worldly body.

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

CHAPTER XX

The Final Judgment

IN THESE sad days when unbelief, rationalism, modernism, and liberalism are so rife, and when these modes of thought are held up as marks of intelligence and culture; when those who still believe in a divinely inspired Bible are pitied as dupes of outworn traditions and superstitions, the very idea of a Judgment to come is held to be absurd. In fact, in the eyes of many advanced modernists, practically everything that claims to be supernatural is absurd. In them is fulfilled what the aged Paul foresaw and predicted: 2 Tim. 4. 3, "For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts." As Peter says, 2 Pet. 3. 3, 4: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers feel asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of

the creation." Also verses 9 and 10: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up," or, as some old authorities translate, "shall be disclosed."

Yes, the Day of the Lord, that Great Day, the Judgment Day, is coming. Whether it will be a day in our sense, or a period, as with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, need not worry us. He is coming; coming "to judge the world in righteousness."

If we did not believe in a final, righteous judgment, we might often be tempted to doubt the righteousness of God's government. There has been and there is so much wrong in our old world. Job felt it and was tempted to curse God and die. The whole Book of Job is a theodicy, i. e., a justification of the ways of God with men. So is psalm 73. So is the latter half of Romans 8. So is the first part of Hebrews 12. God is still good, and it is

part of His great plan that some day He will right earth's wrongs. Because I believe this, I need not fall into despair over the treacheries, the robberies, the heartless crimes against childhood and womanhood, the brutal wrongs against the weak and defenseless, the black blots that stain the pages of history. Some day the wrongs will all be righted. Even the startling headlines in nearly every morning paper that tell of foulness and fiendishness need not make a gloomy pessimist out of me. "Sometime we'll understand." I am an optimist because I am a Christian and accept the Bible as God's Word.

There will be a great, public, final Judgment. This Judgment will embrace the whole human race from Adam to the last man then living. All the dead will be summoned. Every grave will give up its human dust. Those who were never buried will come, and the sea will give up its dead. At that great assize all nations and all individuals will assemble. The great white throne will be set up. The books will be opened. Everyone's spiritual estate will be disclosed and made manifest. The deeds done in the body, the works performed, will be held up to public gaze. The hidden springs and motives of the deeds and

works will be scrutinized. Did they spring from faith? Did the faith work by love? Were works done in Jesus' name? The sins of omission will be noted. The habitual neglect of salvation will condemn. The refusal to show mercy in Jesus' name will be held up as a refusal to minister to Him. Then will it be made clear that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin," and that "the soul of charity is charity for the soul." There it will be seen that all mere humanitarian social service, all service that does not flow out of love to Christ, profits nothing in His sight. Many will say: "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" But because these works did not spring out of a heart that was united to Christ by faith, Christ will say: "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." See Mt. 7. 22, 23.

Those resurrected dead who had died in the faith and those still living in the faith will not be judged in the same sense as the unbelievers. Jn. 5. 24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath eternal life and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." To them the final judgment will

bring a public recognition and confirmation that they have been accepted of God.

The Judge will be the Son of Man. He paints the picture for us and tells the story in Mt. 25. 31–46. There will be no deception there. He knows what is in man. He will bring every secret thought and deed into judgment. Before an astonished world the mask will be torn from every hypocrite, from every one who had led the double life, even though he had been a leader in the Church and had deceived the very elect. They may then cry for the mountains to fall on them and for the hills to cover them, but it will not avail. He who has eyes like flames of fire will see through them. Their false hearts, their dark lives, their secret sins will all be laid bare. All will see that the Judge of all the world doeth right.

The norm, or standard, by which all will be judged will be their former attitude to Christ. Did they receive Him or did they reject Him? Did they come with penitent hearts and believe in Him, or did they harden their hearts in unbelief? Unbelief is the root-sin, the sin that will condemn in the judgment. Faith, faith that out of a penitent heart reaches up, lays hold of, grips, and clings to Christ, and

trusts in Him alone for salvation—such a faith will save. Such a faith always works. It wants to work. From an inner constraint, it must work. It works by love. Its love embraces Christ and all for whom He died. For His sake, in His name, out of love to Him, such a faith moves to, and lives in, grateful, serving love. Undriven, almost unconsciously, the possessor of such a faith seeks out the needy, feeds, gives drink to, clothes, comforts, and cares for, all that it finds. Faith is in the heart. It cannot be observed and seen by men. But its fruits, its work of love, can be seen; and for that reason works will be held up before a gazing world, as the grounds of acquittal.

And so the judgment will prove that God is good, that His government was wise, and that He judges in righteousness.

Glory and power belong to our God; for true and righteous are His judgments. Rev. 19. 1, 2.

CHAPTER XXI

The End of the World

WITH the Judgment period the present world order comes to an end. This poor old earth of ours suffered with the incoming of sin. The ground was cursed. Its products were changed. Thorns and thistles and noxious weeds began to spring up without being planted. No doubt atmosphere and climate felt a change. Before sin came it had all been very good. Man's dwelling was a garden, a paradise, "fit haunt for gods." Jehovah came down and walked and talked with man in the garden. Angels rejoiced at the new creation. "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." As fas as we know, there were no terrific storms, no destructive earthquakes, no killing frosts, no burning heat, no pestilence-breeding, poison-bearing swamps or insects, no upas-blights; no sin, no sickness, no suffering, no death. All was good, very good. Sin changed all. Sin became the great disturbing, destroying, disaster-breeding element in

God's creation. Creation began to groan. It "groaneth until now." It "waiteth for redemption," the redemption of man's body, the resurrection, and judgment.

Jesus Christ was the second Adam. He came to make good all the ruin wrought by the sin of the first Adam. His redemption must be as wide as sin's ruin. The curse that came by sin must be lifted. Earth, poor earth, must feel the throes of redemption. Its groanings must cease. There must be a new, a renewed earth. An earth purified by the fires of the last days.

Heaven and earth, as to their present form and order, will pass away. They will not be annihilated, but they will be changed, transformed. Peter, speaking of the flood, says: "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." 2 Pet. 3. 6. But the world was not annihilated. And so, when in verse 10 he says: "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up," it cannot mean that heaven and earth shall be destroyed, or annihilated.

We must compare Scripture with Scripture. "The earth abideth forever." It will be a

new earth. There will be "nothing to hurt in all God's holy mountain." "The inhabitant shall not say: I am sick." Then "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree." Then "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock."

Then shall there be "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying." From the purified earth every vestige of sin and sorrow shall be absent. It will be a new earth. The nations will learn war no more, "swords will be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning-hooks." It will be "a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." The redeemed shall walk there. The new Jerusalem shall descend out of heaven from God. That new Jerusalem will be in some kind of a heavenly but real connection (a connection not yet fully understood) with the new earth. Earth will be an outer court of heaven. The tabernacle of God will be with men. His Kingdom shall have come. From the throne of God and of the Lamb "He shall reign forever and ever." The kingdoms of the world shall have become "the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

CHAPTER XXII

Eternal Death, or Hell

IN DISCUSSING the Last Things we cannot omit this most unwelcome subject of all Dogmatics.

In every consideration and discussion of this dreadful topic we must always bear in mind these facts:

1. God is "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," 2 Pet. 3. 9. "God our Saviour . . . would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. 2. 4. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ez. 33. 11. Russelites and others who represent the evangelical churches as teaching that God takes pleasure in the sufferings of the lost slander the churches and insult and blaspheme God.

2. God never builded a hell for man. In Mt. 25. 41, Jesus says to those on His left:

"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." For whom was the everlasting fire prepared? Was it prepared for man? Did Jesus know? He says, "Prepared for the devil and his angels." Now turn to verse 34 of the same chapter. Jesus says to those on the right: "Come . . . inherit the kingdom prepared for you." For whom was the Kingdom prepared? For angels? No. For man; yes, for you. Could Jesus make it clearer? Heaven was prepared for man. Hell was not prepared for man but for the devil and his angels. Those who prefer to follow the devil, "the god of this world," rather than the God who is love, must follow their god in eternity and share the fate of the devil and his angels.

3. God has done all that He can do, in consistency with His nature, character, and attributes, to keep man out of hell. He so loved the world, a world lying in wickedness, a defiant, rebellious world, that for it He gave His only begotten Son. Jn. 3. 16. That Son "tasted death for every man," and that vicarious death was the "propitiation for the sins of the whole world." On the ground of that propitiation, that Son has sent out the universal Call: "Come unto me, all ye that labor

and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Mt. 11. 28. God has sent forth His Holy Spirit to offer to man the purchased salvation and to enable man to accept it.

"I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." Acts 2. 17. This Holy Spirit, as we have seen, operates through the Gospel, which God wants preached to every creature. Yes, God has done all that He could to keep man out of hell. He will be able to challenge the lost as He challenged Judah of old when He said: "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Is. 5. 4.

There is a place of eternal punishment for those who reject God, spurn the offers of Grace, despise the Church and her Means of Grace, and so neglect their salvation.

We may not understand fully the nature of the punishment, but we know all that is good for us to know. Certain elements of suffering stand out clearly.

One supreme anguish will be the consciousness of the lost that their fate is their own fault; they brought themselves there. Abraham said to the rich man in torment, "Son,

remember," and reminded him that he had prized this world's pleasures as his "good things" and had neglected to hear "Moses and the prophets." "Son, remember!" Oh how that remembrance must have pierced him through with perpetual agony! Memory will never die.

The lost will be forever shut out from the presence of God and the good. Their companionship will be with the devil and his angels, and with those lost souls who in their earthly life were sensual and devilish. What a company! And the consciousness that there can be no escape! It is too late!

The punishment will be eternal. The same Greek word that is used to describe the duration of life in heaven is used to describe the duration, existence, and suffering of the lost. In addition to the passages already quoted and to many more that we might quote, we merely quote a few telling expressions: "Everlasing fire." "Everlasting punishment." "Guilty of an eternal sin." "Everlasting destruction." "Eternal judgment." "The judgment of eternal fire."

Canon Liddon, as quoted by Doctor Jacobs (Summary of Christian Faith, page 535) well says: "Modern skepticism has tampered with

the word 'eternal' just as it has emptied 'salvation,' 'atonement,' 'grace' of their natural meaning. But 'everlasting' means nothing more or less than that which lasts forever. Where that word is applied to our home in heaven, the hopes and longings of men gladly do justice to the natural force of human language. But it is noteworthy that no stronger expressions are applied anywhere to the eternal life of the blessed in heaven, within the New Testament, than are here used to describe the endlessness of the pains of hell."

Whether the fire is what we call natural and visible fire, or supernatural and invisible we know not. "Our God is a consuming fire." That does not mean natural fire. Natural fire and flame dispel darkness. But the abode of the wicked is "outer darkness." The "Son, remember," the consciousness of the past, the gnawings of a guilty and self-convicted conscience—these, even if nothing more, will be hot enough and hell enough! More we do not know. More we need not know.

Flee from the wrath to come!

CHAPTER XXIII

Everlasting Life, or Heaven

WE have come to the last and best part of our every-day Dogmatics. We have studied and discussed what we believe God has revealed as to Himself and His purposes, His relations and dealings with man. His actual relation with man began in Paradise. Through sin, brought in from without, that Paradise was lost. From that loss forward God has been busy rescuing man from his own ruin and saving him for a final, better, safer Paradise, eternal in heaven.

We have anticipated much that we need to know about heaven. We have seen that in the final consummation heaven and earth will be closely connected. We believe that the new earth, purified, purged of sin and its baleful effects, will be but an outer court of heaven. Then, literally, heaven and earth will be full of God's glory. Human language fails to portray its beauty, its felicity, its glory. Prophets and poets have tried to picture its

supernatural attractions. Even the pen of inspiration seems to feel its insufficiency. Paul had been caught up into the third heaven. For fourteen years he had kept still about it. Then, when his enemies tried to belittle him as unworthy of confidence and were out to ruin his reputation and influence, they made a situation that "compelled" him to "glory" and to speak of "visions and revelations of the Lord." Then, in hesitating and halting phrases, he tells how he in Paradise had heard "unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter." 2 Cor. 12. 4. In 1 Cor. 2. 9 this same Paul had written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Possibly the Seer of Patmos saw even more clearly than Paul and told more fully what he saw. In one place he pictures the new Jerusalem as a city whose walls are of jasper, whose gates are of pearl, whose streets are of gold. Again he speaks of a river of water, of trees on its banks bearing luscious fruits and healing leaves. There are the many mansions, the everlasting habitations, the perfect, happy heavenly homes. Read the last two chapters of your Bible.

In those holy habitations none but the pure in heart can dwell; those who have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb." "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." Rev. 21. 27. Some people imagine that God could and should throw wide the doors and admit every sin-polluted soul into heaven. What kind of a God would that be? What kind of a heaven would that be? Could such souls be happy in such a place? Would it not be torment to them? And, if they could abide there, what kind of a place would heaven become? Could the pure in heart be happy there? No, no. God knows best. In proportion as our reason is enlightened by the Holy Spirit through the Word, in that proportion we see that all God's judgments are true and righteous altogether.

There all will be perfect. The spiritual bodies will be free from sinful desire and lust, pain and death. The mind will no longer be clouded by sin. Instead of knowing "in part," we "shall know even as we are known." 1 Cor. 13. 12. Our judgments will be God's judgment, our will His will.

We do not conceive of heaven as a place of

dreamy idleness. Music will be there. Worship will be there. Service will be there. The study and contemplation of the ways of God will occupy all minds. The things that the "angels desire to look into" will be the things that we shall delight to study. Moses had been in heaven for nearly a millenium and a half; Elias about half as long. When they visited the earth they talked about what was about to take place in Jerusalem, that is, the dying, or atonement, of Jesus. The contemplation and adoration of the Lamb slain from before the foundations of the world will fill up eternity. "We shall serve Him." Whatever all that may include we know not, but it will be a service of joy.

But enough! At best we can now know only in part, and prophesy or teach only in part, but then shall we know even as we are known.

But with other-worldly rapture we can sing:

"Jerusalem the Golden,
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice opprest;
I know not, O I know not,
What social joys are there,
What radiancy of glory,
What light beyond compare!

And when I fain would sing them,
My spirit fails and faints;
And vainly would it image
The assembly of the saints.
They stand, those walls of Zion,
Conjubilant with song,
And bright with many an angel
And all the martyr throng.

There is the Throne of David;
And there, from care released,
The song of them that triumph,
The shout of them that feast.
And they who with their Leader
Have conquered in the fight
Forever and forever
Are clad in robes of white."

AMEN

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